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THE MONTAGUE PAPERS

1711

1711


1711



CHAPTER I.

A dungeon is by no means an agreeable place, and the dungeon of poor Edward Langdale was not an agreeable dungeon. As was common at that time, before Vauban and others had introduced a better system of fortification, the principal defence of the Castle of Coiffy was a wet ditch or fosse, which differed little from those we see surrounding old castles of the Feudal period. This wet ditch was sup-

plied with abundance of water from a spring a little higher up the hill, which, indeed, was the source of one of the principal confluent of the Aube; but the soil, as I have said elsewhere, being somewhat sandy the banks suffered the water to percolate in some slight degree to the detriment of the foundations of the castle; and had not the masonry been very heavy and the mortar somewhat better than we use in building cockney villas, the square flanking tower, to the right of the gateway, as you look east, would have been down fifty years before and crushed to death the denizens of poor Edward's dungeon, if it had been furnished with tenants at that time. Now doubtless the reader learned in romance composition may imagine that I am merely preparing the way for a fine scene of escape from prison with melo-dramatic incidents, new songs, scenery, and decorations. But, as I am sorry to say, no such heroic result was achieved by Lord Montagu's page, I cannot use it as an incident in this true history. I



only mention the percolation of the water of the fosse and its effect upon the foundations amongst which that and other dungeons were placed, to show that the place of the poor youth's confinement was as damp and disagreeable as it could be. Some stones had fallen from the vault above, some large detached pieces of mortar, green and slimy, covered the mud or stone floor, and the walls were all glistening with dampness ; but those walls were too thick, and the blocks of stone of which they were composed, too heavy for any unaided prisoner to have worked his way out with the utmost diligence. In one corner of the miserable hole was a sort of camp bedstead with a straw bed, covered with yellow and green stains from long exposure to the foul moist air—disgust and sickness and death to lie upon—and in another corner, high up on the wall was a little grated window, not so high as the opposite parapet of the glacis, but sufficiently so to admit the air and the sounds from without. The wall was

too thick to allow a prisoner catching even a glimpse of the blue sky or to permit one ray of the sun to enter even at his rising or his setting. It was indeed a desolate chamber. What an expressive word that *desolate* is ! Although sometimes in the heat of an almost tropical climate—heats often more intense than I ever heard of in the tropics themselves—I sometimes grumble a little at the power and ardour of the sun, yet what would the earth be without him, what any place on the earth's surface which he does not visit ? Desolate, desolate indeed ! The first sound which Edward heard after the bolts had ceased to grate in their sockets, was that of a canon, apparently from the walls of the Castle ; some five minutes after the same sound seemed to be repeated from a distance. It might be an echo. He could not tell ; but a moment or two after another report was heard certainly nearer ; and then two more confirmed his fancy that they were signal guns announcing that the well watched English envoy had been

captured and was a prisoner at Coiffy. Some three hours then passed spent in perfect silence, at least only enlivened by the voice of some soldiers on the ramparts, and then came the squeaking of the wry necked fife and the beating of drums, announcing to Edward that troops of some kind were drawing round Coiffy. Then were heard voices on the drawbridge and gay laughter as if officers were being received into the castle with signs of honor. All that passed away and silence resumed her reign till night fell. The light in the lantern burned down almost to the socket. No meat, no drink had been brought to the prisoner ; and he began to ask himself if it could be their intention to starve him there in darkness. His feelings were not pleasant.

Just about that time there was some noise and bustle from without—probably on the drawbridge or at the gate—the tramp of horses and voices speaking. Then for a few minutes all was silent again. Then there were sounds just

above more distinct and clear than any he had hitherto heard. People speaking and others moving slowly about, evidently penetrating to the cell which Edward tenanted, by the broken parts of the vault on which the flooring of the upper chamber rested.

"Ah!" cried a voice with a groan, "you have got me by the shoulder just by the wound. Do not do that! Put your hand lower down—not there, not there, lower still. That young devil! he does not miss his mark indeed."

"Lay him on the bed—flat on his back" said another voice. "Now, Brin, is not that easier for you? and then followed several sentences in a language Edward did not understand at all.

"The two blacksmiths" said Edward to himself "they have just brought in the wounded man."

For some half hour various sounds succeeded, some distinct, others confused, to which the young prisoner did not pay much attention;

and then there was a sort of lull—not quite silence, but still much less bustle. Even slight sounds were easily distinguishable in the dungeon ; for the roof was so far dilapidated that here and there the rays of light from above found their way through a chink in the flooring, and traced a yellow line upon the pavement. He could hear the wounded man groan and ask in a faint tone for water.

“He is badly hurt it seems” said Edward Langdale to himself, “if the horse had not shied away it would have gone through his head and served the traitor right.”

Edward wanted a little more softening to make him a real sentimental hero ; but I can only paint him as I find him. He did not feel the slightest remorse for what he had done. He thought it but right—but just ; and he would have done it over again the next minute. It is true the groans of the wounded man did somewhat annoy him. He felt no pleasure in his pain ; but as to the mere fact of having shot

him because he had betrayed his Lord; Edward was as hard as a stone.

It seemed indeed as if Monsieur de Bourbonne was inclined to try upon the young Englishman the treatment they sometimes employ to tame wild beasts, fasting and darkness. He had kept him without food all day; and now the light in the lantern went out and all was darkness in the dungeon, except where these yellow streaks from above chequered the flooring; and the youth's only entertainment was to listen while a good deal of walking to and fro and speaking took place overhead. He divined from all he heard that a surgeon had been sent for and was performing some operation upon the wounded man. At length the latter exclaimed, "Ah you have got it now—there, there, that is comfortable. It feels as if you had pulled out a hot coal!"

Just at that time a soldier opened the dungeon door and brought in a pitcher of *cool* water and some bread.

"Am I to be kept in darkness?" asked Edward.

"I don't know;" answered the man, holding up his own lantern to look at him, "you have offended Monsieur le Comte mightily it seems; but I do not suppose that he intends you should have no light."

"Well then tell him something for me," replied Edward. "Say that I am greatly obliged to him for all his kindness; but that I have friends in France who will repay him sevenfold or I am much mistaken in them."

The man went away but returned in a minute or two with a fresh candle.

"Did you tell him?" asked Edward.

"Yes," answered the soldier, who seemed a good-natured sort of person, "I told him but you had better not enrage him. It will do no good, young gentleman."

Edward ate heartily of his poor fare and drank the cool water as if it had been nectar. He had hardly finished the temperate meal

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when he heard a voice above, which he recognised, by a slight hesitation of speech, as that of Monsieur de Bourbonne, and he certainly might be excused, in his circumstances, for listening with both his ears.

First the Count made several enquiries as to the state of the wounded man, and then he added, "Well, my good friend, I have got the young tiger who scratched you safe caged in the worst dungeon of the castle, I hope you will get well; but if you should die I will hang him from the *herse*."

"For God's sake do not do that Monsieur," cried the companion of the patient.

"If I die, hang him as high as you please," growled the voice of Maitre Brin; "the Cardinal cannot do any thing to me after I am dead, and the young devil had better go with me."

"Ha" said Monsieur de Bourbonne in a tone of some surprise "he boasts of having some good friends in France, and speaks as if he personally knew His Eminence."

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"And so he does" said Brins more timid companion, "he is a great favourite of the Cardinal ; and Monsieur de Trouson warned us not to touch a hair of his head under any circumstances. He said that we should be held to answer for any evil that happened to him. We were only to follow him wherever he went from Nantes, and not lose sight of him till he joined the English Lord."

"Then did you first see him at Nantes ;" asked the Count.

"Surely," replied the other, "we watched in the court yard while he was in with the Cardinal, that we might take good note of him as he came out."

There was a silence of some minutes, and then the voice of the sick man was heard saying ; "After all you had better not treat him badly Monseigneur. I do not think I am much hurt, and if he is hardly used some of us will suffer, you be may sure."

"You should have told me this before,"

said Monsieur de Bourbonne in a very sharp tone.

"Why what time had we to tell you any thing, Monseigneur?" asked the wounded man's brother.

"At all events we tell you now;" growled Brin, "and this talking is not likely to do me good. The lad is as fierce as a young wolf—he threatened to shoot me once before; but he is a pet of the Cardinal—one of his own people for what we know; and now that you are told he is so, you must use him as you think fit. It is no fault of ours—we have not hurt him."

It is probable that the interview was less satisfactory to the Count de Bourbonne than he had expected; for he brought it speedily to a conclusion, and Edward, for full half an hour after, heard the two men above talking together in a language he did not understand. At the end of that time, the bolt of the door was withdrawn, and the soldier who had pre-

viously brought him bread and water, appeared again with somewhat of a grin upon his face. Well, young gentleman," he said, "Monsieur le Comte begs you will send him up the safe conduct you mentioned to him. After seeing that, perhaps they will treat you better."

"Tell him I will not," said Edward in a resolute tone, "he may come and take it from me by force—or he may see it here in my presence; but I give it out of my hands to no one, especially to one who has treated me unlike a soldier and a gentleman—Tell him what I say."

The soldier laughed, "'Pon my word, you are a bold one," he said, "do you not know you are quite in his power?"

"Not so much as you think," replied Edward, "I am not the least afraid of him—Tell him exactly what I say."

A full hour passed, and probably it was spent in some degree of anxious and hesitating

deliberation between Monsieur de Bourbonne and the Count de Boulogne, his father-in-law; for they remained the whole of that time shut up together in a small room on the second floor. One can easily conceive that it was a hard thing for a proud and irritable man to make any confession to a mere lad who set him at defiance in language somewhat tinged with contempt. But a bold face stoutly kept up has a great effect upon most men, and if Edward had known the count intimately he could not, though it was entirely accidental, have chosen his course better. De Bourbonne was brave, and even rash; but he had a terrible reverence for power; and when he found the youth's account of himself confirmed even by the very man whose life he had nearly taken, fancy conjured up all sorts of ministerial indignation, and shewed him the service he had rendered in the capture of Lord Montagu—on which he had based so many gorgeous dreams—more than counter-balanced, in the eyes of

Richelieu by his treatment of one of the Cardinal's favorites. Monsieur de Boulogne too, an older and milder man, strongly counselled moderation and gentleness; somewhat censured what had been already done, and advised recourse to measures perhaps too directly and suddenly opposed.

Still pride struggled hard with de Bourbonne. He vowed he did not and would not believe the tale which he had heard. "What hold," he asked, "could a mere fierce English lad have upon the Cardinal?" and for some time his father-in-law reminded him in vain that Richelieu, though a wonderfully great man, was sometimes capricious in his affections, suggested that as he was not a little superstitious too in regard to astrology and the occult sciences, he might find some imaginary connexion between the youth's fate and his own; and pointed out that it was utterly improbable Edward should treat him with such daring disrespect, if he was not certain of some strong support.

In the mean time the poor prisoner remained in some doubt and anxiety. Imprisonment, solitude, and low diet, had gone some way to tame the wild bird, and the uncertainty of the last hour had been heavy. He had fancied that the words he had heard spoken by the wounded man and his companion would produce an immediate change ; but as minute after minute passed by, and nothing indicated any better treatment, he began to despond. At length, however, he heard the tramp of feet and the jingle of spurs, and a man with a torch opened the door, admitting Monsieur de Boulogne and one or two attendants.

“ Young gentleman,” said the old nobleman, with a reproving but fatherly air, “ you have been acting very rashly and impetuously towards the Count my son-in-law.”

“ And how has he been acting towards me, sir,” asked Edward, in a more respectful tone than he had used towards the younger man.

“ Somewhat harshly, I am afraid ;” said the

other, looking round him, "he could not have known the state of this place, or he would not have put you here."

"What right had he to put me in a dungeon at all?" asked Edward.

"Why, you shot and nearly killed one of his attendants," was the reply.

"Not at all," answered Edward, you are deceived, sir, I shot an attendant of Lord Montagu, whom I caught in the act of betraying his master. Ask his Lordship—ask the man himself, or his brother, if they had not both taken service with my Lord and received his money."

The old gentleman smiled. "That puts a new face upon the matter;" he said, "but let us have no recriminations, I wish to smooth matters down between you and my fiery relative. You say you have a safe conduct from his Eminence of Richelieu. Let me see it."

"On the sole condition, sir, that you restore to me at once," said Edward, putting his

hand into a pocket in the breast of his coat, and taking out the passport in its velvet case.

"Let me examine it," said Monsieur de Boulogne, "do not fear, you shall have it again in a moment."

"I do not fear," replied the youth, giving him the case, "I am sure you are a man of honour by your face."

"Here, man, hold the torch nearer," said the Count, and putting a pair of spectacles or barnacles, as they were then commonly called, upon his nose, he proceeded to examine the safe conduct minutely. But all was in proper form and order, calling upon all royal officers, governors of cities, castles, or provinces, to let the Seigneur Edward Langdale and suite pass and repass, without limitation of time or place, throughout the land of France; and there was the seal of the council and the undoubted signature of the prime minister.

The face of the Count turned very grave as he read. "This is odd;" he said, "my son

should have seen this. Here is your suite mentioned, young gentleman. Where is your suite?"

"I might reply," said Edward, "that any one I chose to name is of my suite, for his Eminence put no restrictions. But I wish not to quibble. The suite of which he speaks is now at Nancy, with the exception of one page," he added, half smiling, "who is now in Venice."

"Well, this is all very strange!" said the old man, "I cannot understand the Cardinal giving you such a wide safe conduct at all—an Englishman—and a youth like you."

"I am neither bound nor inclined to explain the motives of his Eminence," replied Edward. "If you think fit to interrogate any one upon that subject, it must be himself."

"God forbid!" cried Monsieur de Boulogne, eagerly. "There, take the paper and come with me. I will take this business on myself. Two such young rash spirits may make mischief."

Edward followed willingly enough ; and the old Count led him up the stairs from the dungeon to a tolerably comfortable room in one of the towers, where he left him, on his promise to remain till he could confer with Monsieur de Bourbonne. In a few minutes the two noblemen entered together ; de Bourbonne evidently struggling not very successfully to keep up his dignity while forced to make disagreeable concessions.

"The Count de Boulogne informs me, sir," he said, "that you have really got a safe conduct from his Eminence of Richelieu."

"Which you have known ever since mid-day," said Edward.

"Hush, hush," said the elder gentleman. "No more of that. Tell my-son-in-law, young gentleman, what it is you demand of him in the circumstances."

"I demand that he shall respect the Cardinal's safe conduct," answered the youth ; but de Bourbonne waved his hand, saying "I will respect it

by sending you to his Eminence under guard on the first opportunity.—What more ?”

“That I be no more put in a wet dungeon—that I be not fed on bread and water—that I have my baggage restored to me, and that I am treated in every respect as that safe conduct gives me a right to expect.”

“Granted,” said the Count ; “but upon the clear understanding that you are a prisoner, and remain such till I can send you to the Cardinal.”

“With the clear understanding,” added Edward, “that you shall be called to strict account for every hour you keep me prisoner without lawful cause, and for your manifest disobedience of the Cardinal’s written orders under his own hand and seal.”

The Count’s face flushed, and he exclaimed, in evident embarrassment, “What the fiend are you to the Cardinal, or the Cardinal to you ?”

But Edward saw that one way or other he had

got the advantage. "That, sir," he said, in a cool tone, "you may have to learn hereafter from other lips than mine. In the mean time, you can do exactly as you think fit. Obey the commands you have received in the King's name, or disobey them as seems expedient to you; but only do not put me in a damp dungeon, or feed me on bread and water any more, for that is as unpleasant to me as it is dangerous to yourself"

"But suppose the safe conduct is a forgery," said de Bourbonne.

"It would be a curious one," replied the youth, with perfect composure, "somewhat bold to devise and difficult to practise. Of that you can judge yourself; but take care you judge right. I have only one other demand to make, namely, to be permitted to visit my Lord Montagu."

"He has gone to bed," said de Bourbonne sharply, "and I shall consider of the matter further till to-morrow. I have only one more

question. How much liberty in this castle do you want—it will depend entirely upon whether you do or do not give me your parole that you will not attempt to escape.”

“Now this is strange,” said Edward, with an irrepressible laugh, “one moment I am suspected of forgery, and the next my word of honor is to be relied on implicitly. However, Monsieur de Comte, as I have no intention of leaving you quite so soon, and as if I did escape I should run straight to his Eminence, to whom you say you intend to send me, I will give you my parole. But would you allow me to insinuate that I am exceedingly hungry, and that I have always considered a little good wine of Beaugency, better than a draught of water out of a pitcher not over clean.”

Both the Counts laughed, and old Monsieur de Boulogne, taking his son-in-law by the arm, led him away, saying “Come, come, I shall make you two better friends before I have done.”

“You will need to do so, father;” said Monsieur de Bourbonne, “for, on my life, it shall belong enough before that keen boy sees the Cardinal. If what he says be true, as I suppose it is, the tales he has to tell might ruin us; and if it is false, he well deserves a good long spell of imprisonment.”

CHAPTER II.

THE writers of biography and auto or pseudo-autobiography, who flourished and were so abundant in France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, made a great mistake by adding to the simple narrative a great number of romantic incidents which there is much reason to believe had no foundation in fact. Putting aside the morality or immorality of lying, they committed an artistic blunder. History is

the best romance. Just in as much as a painter or a sculptor can approach to the realities of the human form, so is the grace and interest of his design. Just inasmuch as a writer can approach to the truth of history—telling all the truth minutely—so is the romantic history of his book. Only history is so very romantic, that no one who writes it completely can obtain credence. Let us see whether the reader will believe a morsel as true history when it appears under the character of romance.

The fact of the capture of Lord Montagu spread rapidly through all France. Couriers carried it to Villeroy and Rochelle. Rumour brought it rapidly to Paris; and thence with concentric ripples the knowledge was carried far and wide to all who were unwise enough to meddle with politics in those days.


The effect was very different upon different people. The great Cardinal rejoiced at the success of his well-laid schemes, for he had long known, and watched with a keen eye, the nego-

tiations which had been entrusted to the English nobleman.

Perhaps, however, he rejoiced more at the hold which he doubted not the seized papers of the diplomatist would give him upon his own enemies in France itself, than upon the means afforded of frustrating all the combinations which had been effected against his country. His mighty mind feared foreign enemies much less than secret cabal at home. In fact, he knew that the fortress of his power was strong enough to resist a cannonade, but might not be proof against a mine.

Nor was the spirit of the King dissatisfied to learn that Buckingham's agent had fallen into his power with all his correspondence, comprising probably one-third of the nobility of France. We have not had time, we shall not have time to dwell upon the character of Louis, though it well merits a treatise to itself. His sports in youth had been cruel, his amusements low. His father had called him "that wicked

boy ;” and though he possessed all that father’s courage and much of his military skill, he had none of his kindness of heart, his clemency or his gentleness. It might be that he did not feel pleasure in the shedding of blood, but it is certain that he never objected to shed it ; and when his best friends and greatest favourites were condemned, often by unlawful tribunals, he consented to their death with coolness or a jest. But there was one in France who heard of Lord Montagu’s capture with very different feelings. Anne of Austria, the unhappy queen, the childless wife of the coldest-hearted monarch that ever lived, received the tidings with terror and confusion. It might be that the tales they tell of certain secret communications between her and the brilliant Duke of Buckingham were founded in truth. It might be that she had connived at schemes for the overthrow of a minister who persecuted her. But it is beyond doubt that she held dangerous correspondence with her own family in Spain ; that Buck-




ingham had been negotiating with that court; and that Montagu was his most confidential emissary. What letters might not be upon his person at the moment of his arrest?—What papers which might give a complete triumph to her enemies, and she had many? Happily, however, she had many friends sincere, devoted, and fearless. At the very moment when she was in the most profound agony of terror, one of these was near at hand.

It is well known that gentlemen of good family, but small means, were in those days proud to accept even what we consider menial offices in the household of Princes or great men. A youth of the name of Laporte, had been attached to the service of Anne of Austria, almost ever since her entrance into France, in the humble capacity of valet de chambre. In one of the many intrigues of the court, he had incurred the anger of the King, but had been permitted to enter a corps of cavalry, known as the *gens d'armes de la Reine*, as ensign. This corps,

at the time of the capture of Lord Montagu, was serving on the frontiers of Lorraine, and was one of the first to be called towards the Chateau of Coiffy, to form part of the escort of the noble prisoner on the way to Paris. But Laporte was not with his regiment. He was, when the news arrived, on leave of absence in the capital, and his presence had been known to the young Queen. At midnight and in disguise he was brought to the Louare; and Anne of Austria at once laid open to her attached servant the terrible apprehensions under which she suffered. To ascertain if her name was at all compromised in the correspondence of Lord Montagu, was of immediate importance. It was, in fact, an affair of life and death; but to do so seemed utterly hopeless. All the papers of the prisoner were in the hands of his captors, and the utmost secrecy was maintained as to their contents. Laporte, however, undertook the difficult task; and on the following day set out to rejoin his regiment at Coiffy. The way was long, and he

did not reach the Castle till the prisoner and his escort were already on the march to Paris; but he was near enough to witness the absurd gascnade of Monsieur de Bourbonne, who having gathered together a very considerable force, notified the Duke of Lorraine of the day and hour when he would commence his journey. A cannon was fired from the battlements to give notice that the French troops were in motion, and the whole body remained in battle array for about half an hour, to give the Duke, Monsieur de Bourbonne said, an opportunity of rescuing the prisoner if he could. When this comedy had been enacted, the worthy Laporte joined his regiment and fell into the ranks, resolved, as he states, to watch for some happy accident which might enable him to communicate with the captive. Fortune favoured him sooner than he had expected and indeed beyond all expectation. In the midst of the troops, consisting of some nine hundred horse, rode the Counts of Bourbonne and Boulogne, with Lord

Montagu between them, treated with every mark of profound respect, but disarmed, without spurs, mounted on a small horse not very capable of competing in speed with those which surrounded him. Laporte marked all this well; but a much more easy and secure mode of communicating with the English nobleman than any effort in the open field, soon presented itself. The Baron de Ponthieu, a gentleman of considerable distinction, was one of the officers of Laporte's company of *gens d'armes de la Reine*, and as soon as he saw a man whose leave of absence did not expire for some weeks, suddenly rejoin his regiment, an instant suspicion crossed his mind that his inferior officer had some important object in view. The Baron was one of the most devoted partizans of the Queen. He knew that Laporte was a bird of the same colour, and also that he came straight from Paris. Quick and clear-sighted Ponthieu, it appears, in his conjectures, came near the real object of his companion in arms; but he had the




rare gift of discretion, and after having sounded Laporte, and found that he was unwilling to trust his dangerous secret even to him, he contented himself with losing no occasion to give facilities for communication between the Queen's attendant and the English prisoner.

What marks the age as especially an age of faction, is the fact, that men, usually sensitive on the point of honor, had not the slightest scruple in violating their most sacred obligations and most solemn oaths in favor of the party to which they belonged. No shame, no remorse, attached to such acts ; but on the contrary they were looked upon, both by actors and observers, as proofs of chivalrous daring and skilful diplomacy. Both Ponthieu and Laporte, though serving in what was called "The Queen's *gens d'armes*," were the soldiers of the King, bound by solemn oath to obey and serve him against all and every one ; but they had not the least hesitation in betraying their trust, and violating their promise, when it was to assist the Queen

or thwart the Minister. It was not dishonest or disloyal in their eyes; it was honourable and chivalrous. There is too much of this in the world even now; but there was much more then; and the wars of the French both brought the abuse to its height and in some degree wrought its cure.

Monsieur de Bourbonne had received secret instructions to treat Lord Montagu with every sort of consideration while taking all measures to prevent his escape; and at each halt upon the long march, the officers of the various corps which escorted him were invited to bear him company during the evening, and various devices were formed for amusing the prisoner. Ponthieu, divining as I have said Laporte's object, invited his young comrade to partake his quarters, which were always near those of de Bourbonne, and took care that he should be at all the parties given in the evening, for Montagu's entertainment. At the very first interview, Montagu, who never forgot a face, remembered having seen the young officer when



he had visited Paris some years before, and mutual looks of intelligence conveyed the information that Laporte was not there without a purpose. Cards were introduced, and the ensign of the Queen's *gens d'armes*, contrived to slip a pencil across to the captive. On the succeeding night, Laporte sat at the same card table with Montagu, Monsieur de Bourbonne, and Ponthieu. But in shuffling the pack, the young officer let it fall, scattering the cards upon the floor. He stooped instantly to remove the awkwardness. Montagu stooped also with an easy grace to assist him : and before he rose, a note was in his pocket, beseeching him to inform the writer if amongst his papers there had been any matter which could compromise the Queen, and desiring him to be very careful of even mentioning her name.

On the following evening Lord Montagu, with a free and unembarrassed air, held out his hand to the young officer when they met, and with better skill than the Signor Morini, con-

trived to slip into the hand of Laporte an answer to the note of the preceding night, without being seen by any one.

It conveyed the joyful news that the Queen's name had never been mentioned in the papers which had fallen into the hands of the captors, and that Montagu himself would rather die than compromise her in any way.

Nevertheless, although he knew the anxiety and suspense of his royal lady, Laporte did not venture to trust the billet out of his own hands, nor again to quit his regiment to carry the intelligence himself. He was forced, therefore, to accompany the prisoner's escort by slow marches to Paris, and to see Montagu lodged in the Bastille. As soon as that was done, however, he found his way secretly to the Louvre, and easily explained to Anne of Austria the cause of his delay and the complete success of his mission. He tells the story himself, but with the usual fate of zeal, intelligence, and devotion, his services were but poorly rewarded though they were highly praised.

CHAPTER III.

AND where was Edward Langdale all this time? On the day which saw Lord Montagu a prisoner in the Bastile, the poor lad had been just a month in the Chateau de Coiffy; and his captivity was not yet at an end. Care had been taken that he should have no opportunity of seeing Lord Montagu, and though he was well treated, and his personal liberty seemed but little abridged within the walls, there was a cold silent

guard kept over him, which tended a good deal to subdue his impatient spirit. If he spoke to any one, he received a civil answer ; but it was confined to two or three words, and never afforded any information. If he asked for writing materials, they were promised, but never came. If he walked on one of the ramparts, there was a soldier at each end, who never lost sight of him ; and his own chamber, with one or two of the passages near, was the only place where he found himself free from supervision. His principal resort was the walls, where, on fine days, he would sit and think, and gaze over the undulating country around for hours, pondering his own fate, dreaming of Lucette, or asking himself what the conduct of Monsieur de Bourbonne could mean.

It certainly had its meaning, though the secret was a very simple one. The reader has already the key in the few words spoken by the Count on the first night of Edward's captivity. He had determined that the youth should have

no communication with Richelieu, till he himself had reaped the reward he expected for the valuable services he believed he had rendered.

For many reasons, however, the Cardinal was slower in bestowing that reward than the Count expected. In the first place, his mind was profoundly occupied with matters which we shall have to touch upon hereafter. In the next place, the service of the Count was not so great as he imagined. Lord Montagu was a prisoner it is true ; the treaty with Spain, Loraine, and Savoy was in the Minister's hands, and the schemes of the external enemies of France were dissipated or deranged ; but there were few names in France itself implicated by the papers which had been seized ; and fewer letters found which could bring home to Richelieu's foes the treason which many of them had certainly meditated. Thus day after day passed without bringing to Monsieur de Bourbonne the expected recompense ; and it suited well with the Cardinal's policy to keep the nobility of the

kingdom expectants upon the bounty of the Minister, as they were now daily becoming, rather than dictators to the government, as they had too long been. Poor Edward suffered without the Minister knowing it, and at the end of three long months the youth determined to endure but a few days longer. He contrived with some oil and the soot of his lamp to fabricate a sort of ink. A leaf torn out of one of the books which were amongst the baggage returned to him, served him for paper sufficient to write on ; and with such rude materials he contrived to indict a letter to Monsieur de Bourbonne, which will explain itself.

“ Sir,” he said, “ you informed me that you would send me to the Cardinal Prime Minister by the very first opportunity, and on that understanding I gave my parole not to escape. You have broken your word, and I might be held justifiable in breaking mine ; but the word of an English gentleman is too sacred to be trifled with. I, therefore, give you notice of my inten-

tion to leave the Castle of Coiffy as soon as I find an opportunity of doing so after this letter has had full time to reach you, and you have had full time to take your measures accordingly. Your men have debarred me the use of pen and ink, and cut me off from all communication with others. They may neglect or refuse to carry this letter, but I shall give it to one of them for that purpose, and if it do not reach you, the fault is not that of

EDWARD LANGDALE."

"Post Scriptum. I shall not set out for fourteen days."

This epistle was given to the servant, who brought his food, with an injunction to have it given to the post courier. At first the man hesitated to take it; but on seeing that it was directed to his master, he ultimately consented, and Edward applied all his thoughts to devise the means of carrying the resolution he had expressed into execution, let Monsieur de Bourbonne take what precautions he would. The

fourteen days passed without any answer, and all seemed dull and tranquil as before, but some messengers had been coming and going, and Edward little doubted that some one of them bore directions in regard to himself. To test the fact, on the fifteenth morning he walked out upon the walls, and approached quietly one of the little flights of steps that led down from the ramparts towards some of the outworks. Instantly the sentinel presented his musketoon, saying "you cannot pass here!"

"Why not," asked the youth, "I have passed before."

"The orders are changed," answered the man, gruffly. "Keep off, I say."

Edward was satisfied. Monsieur de Bourbonne had received his letter; his parole was at an end, and he felt almost as if he were already free. Two days passed without his making any attempt to escape; but he carefully selected every thing from amongst his baggage which was most valuable, including money; and packed it in the

smallest compass. Sometimes, indeed, he was tempted to leave all behind him, for he foresaw that he should have to swim the moat, but the absolute necessity of money in almost every transaction of life he had learned early, and he remembered that he had a large piece of France to traverse. His attention was next directed to ascertain if by passing boldly through the interior of the chateau he could not turn the position of the sentinels upon the walls just in face of his windows, and emerge upon the opposite ramparts, which, from all he recollected of the approach to the castle, and from various other circumstances which had come to his knowledge during his long stay, he imagined were neither very high nor very well guarded. Away he went then down the passage, through which he had always been allowed to pass to a door at the end on the left hand side, where there had usually sat a servant, and which he had understood—believed would be the better word, for he knew not what had led him to the

conclusion—which he believed led to the apartments of the Countess de Bourbonne. But now no servant sat there either to question, or let him pass. The door, however, was shut, and when he tried it he found it locked.

It was a great disappointment ; for the servant who usually sat there was sometimes male, sometimes female, and he had calculated that he could devise some means of getting either out of the way. The ramparts before his windows were too steep for him to attempt the leap. Had the fosse been immediately below, he might have risked it, trusting that the water would soften his fall ; but there was a ridge of dry ground ran along under the wall, and the breaking or dislocation of a limb with his consequent recapture was inevitable. He returned to his room disappointed but not disheartened, and instantly applied himself to form some new scheme. The first thought that struck him was that a rope ladder might be constructed from the ropes which in those days

garnished every bedstead in France. It would be short indeed, but at all events it might diminish the distance between the parapet and the ground, and by dropping from the last round he would not, he thought, have more than eight or ten feet to fall. He instantly set to work to detach the ropes from the sacking, but he had not unlaced a yard before he asked himself how he was to fasten the upper end of his ladder, when it was constructed, to the parapet. With all his ingenuity he was puzzled. There was nothing in the room of which he could make a hook—nothing in the world except an ancient pair of tongs for putting wood upon the fire, and he might as well have tried to make a hook out of the Colossus of Rhodes. He looked round and round in vain, when suddenly as his eyes rested upon the heavy key in the lock of the door, he thought that keys would sometimes fit more locks than one. He took it out at once, greased it well with oil from the lamp, and walked quietly along to the door at the end of

the passage. It was locked, and by applying his eye to the key hole he saw that there was no obstruction. The key had been taken away, probably to prevent any tampering with the servants on the part of the young prisoner. But he saw also three persons sitting by a large fireplace in the long gallery before him. They were a lady of two or three and twenty, probably Madame de Bourbonne, a very beautiful child, three years old perhaps, and another woman, whose dress betrayed the Soubrette.

Edward had to return to his room again, and wait with impatience for the trial of the key. As he meditated by the remains of his fire, he remembered having heard that but a year or two before, the famous Duke of Buckingham himself, whilst ambassador in Paris, in a wild frolic, had passed through the whole of the royal palace disguised as the white lady.

"Some sort of disguise might not be amiss," thought Edward, "Each of these old Chateaux has some superstitious tale attached to it. A

sheet and a little lamp black will make a very good ghost. But it is not yet time."

His impatience had well nigh ruined all, however, for just as he was about to take one of the sheets from the bed to tear a hole for his head to pass through, the servant entered his room with a fresh supply of wood.

"When does Monsieur de Bourbonne return?" asked Edward, "I hope when he does he will give me a warmer room."

"I do not know," answered the man piling more wood on the fire. "Some say he comes Saturday. That is the day after to morrow."

Edward let him depart, and then sat and listened. For at least two hours sounds were still to be heard in the Chateau, but they gradually died away. At midnight the pass-word was heard upon the walls; then there was some tramping up and down; and then all was silent. Edward knew that there was a snug warm pavillion or look out thrown forth from the walls, whence the whole line of the curtain, on that side, could be seen, but which was shel-

tered from all rude winds, and he doubted not the two guards had retreated to its friendly covering, for it was a cold spring night, and the keen blast was sweeping over the open country round. He waited some five minutes longer, and then wrapped the sheet round him, smeared his face with the soot of the lamp, and sallied out with the key in his hand. All was darkness along the passage, and he had to feel with his fingers along the wall, not without some anxiety as to how he should find his way through the part of the house with which he was not acquainted. Liberty was at stake, however, and on he went. Fortune favoured him; at the end of the passage a faint light came through the key hole of the door he was in search of. It was red though dim, and he at once comprehended that it did not proceed from any lamp left burning, but from the embers of a half exhausted fire. Then came the all-important moment. Quietly and slowly he applied the key to the lock. It entered readily; but when

he came to turn it, there was some resistance. He was almost in despair; but thinking he might not have pressed the key home he pushed hard, and it started forward with some noise. He paused to listen, but there was no sound, and twisting it slowly round, the lock gave way, the door opened, and the gallery he had seen through the key hole was before him, with the wood fire burnt low in a large fire-place on the left hand side. There were a number of doors on the right tight shut, to keep out the wintry air; but the gallery was vacant, and the fire gave light enough. On then he strode towards the opposite end, calculating that he was now in the great tower or lodging part of the Castle, and soon reached the further extremity of the gallery where another door presented itself, with the key in the lock. The moment he opened it the cold air rushed in, and he found himself in a little garden upon the inner ramparts. All was still; and there seemed nothing there but one or two bare apple trees, and some

withered shrubs and flowers. The rampart, however, was very high, and all the young man's trouble would have been in vain had he not divined that there must be some lower outwork to defend the foot of the wall. The moon was not yet up ; there was no light but that of the stars, and he walked cautiously along under the parapet till he came to some descending steps. He could see no one on the walls, but the dry leaves cracked under his foot-steps, and more than once made him stop, thinking some sentinel was near. At the bottom of the steps was another wall, with embrasures and a solitary cannon, evidently commanding the approach from some work below, and making his way along for about forty steps Edward reached some more stairs, which led him down to what seemed a small bastion.

At the foot he paused, for upon the wall of the outwork he perceived some dark object he could not clearly make out. It was too large for a man, he thought, and it remained motion-

less, and after gazing for several minutes he quietly mounted the five steps which led up to the platform. He then perceived that the object which had alarmed him was a rude sentry box with a cannon hard by, and having ascertained that it was empty, he looked over and beheld the river flowing quietly through the fosse at the foot.

The wall was about eleven feet in height, and he certainly would not have feared to leap, but noise was to be avoided, and tying the end of the sheet to one of the trunnions of the cannon, the young adventurer let himself down by his hands as far as he could, and then dropped into the water. A slight splash was all the sound ; but he sunk deep and his feet touched the bottom. He rose again, however, and thanking in heart the harsh augur who had first counselled him to learn to swim, he struck out for the other side of the fosse, and reached it in a moment. It was a sharp night it is true for cold bathing ; but his heart felt warm with the consciousness

of freedom, and getting amongst the low bushes which covered a good part of the ground on the Loraine side of the castle, he walked rapidly round to the other side, and then struck across the country directly towards the heart of Burgundy.

Edward had many motives for so shaping his course. He had heard a vague rumour that the Duke of Loraine had made his peace with France, and therefore he was as likely to be interrupted in the Duke's territories as any where. In the next place he knew that his evasion must be discovered early on the following morning, and the pursuit was of course likely to be directed on the side where the open doors and the sheet tied to the cannon gave evidence of the course he had first taken. But after all there was a certain degree of whim, or character, or call it what you like it. He had told Monsieur de Bourbonne that, if at liberty, he would go straight to the Cardinal de Richelieu. Some people might have thought that it was going

straight into a lion's den. But Edward judged differently, and he determined to go frankly, and at once, throw himself upon the Cardinal's generosity, tell him all he had done, and all he had suffered, and shew him that he had kept his word in coming back to him, though only seven months instead of two years had passed since they had parted. He anticipated no obstruction in that direction, if he could once get at a distance from Coiffy, for he still had the Cardinal's safe conduct about him.


CHAPTER IV.

TWENTY miles in a day is no great walking. I myself have walked forty in ten hours. But the great point is what we walk over. It is the great point in life too ; for the worthy Patriarchs, I have no doubt, journeyed through life for two or three hundred years without getting weary, simply because they had such an easy road to travel. Abraham had to fight now and then it is true, and from time to time there was



a quarrel amongst the herdsmen ; but these were little incidents that only served to enliven the way, and the rest of the travel was without excitement of mind or great exertion of body. If Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob had passed nothing but low entangling bushes—bilberries, and cranberries, and sometimes blackberries, with their long prickly arms, they would have laid themselves down to rest much sooner, and felt themselves as tired as Edward Langdale, when just about day break he reached the end of the twentieth mile from the Chateau of Coiffy.

Edward had then reached a country somewhat more open ; and he sat himself down to rest not far from a little country road, which he could trace by the eye running on, almost in a straight line, towards the tall square tower of a village Church. But that village Church was at least six miles distant ; and Edward had not tasted food during fourteen or fifteen hours. His wet clothes had dried upon him too under



the cold night wind, stiffening every limb; and he had no comfortable little brandy bottle, such as often cheers the way for the modern romantic traveller.

The spot where he stopped; however, was a dry grassy mound, with some yellow broken ground before it; and out of the bank welled a little clear rivulet, where he quenched his thirst, after the olden fashion, before ladles or goblets were invented.

While he was still stooping down, he heard the beat of horses' feet upon the road; and with that strong consciousness of running away which makes every man who possesses it more or less timid, he hid himself under the bank as well as he could.

Presently, as well as the footfalls, he heard the sound of voices; and for a moment his apprehensions were increased by one of the voices sounding familiar to his ear.

He was relieved in a moment however; and very much relieved.

“Why you are drunk already, you beast,” said one voice; and then came the thick and juicy tones of good Pierrot la Grange, with the music of brandy very strong in them, “To be sure I am,” answered Pierrot, “have I not had sorrow and trouble enough to make me drunk every day of the week for the last three months?—My noble Lord in prison—Master Ned no one knows where—the only lad in all this world that could keep me straight.”

“Pierrot, Pierrot!” shouted Edward, “Jacques Beaupré, halt there, I am nearer than you hink.”

The two horsemen stopped, the one with a dumb and stupified gaze around, a little conscience stricken perhaps at the state in which he had to present himself to his young master, the other with an observation in a low tone as to the consequences of talking of the Devil. But Edward was soon by their side, and they were not long upon their horses' backs. Each man sincerely glad to see the young English-

man, for force of character as often wins affection as respect. Edward's adventures were soon told, and luckily the two men had some solid provisions with them, as well as Pierrot's brandy bottle, which was now nearly vacant of contents. While the young gentleman ate and drank, the history of the two servants was related somewhat at greater length than his own, though it was a very monotonous one. They had remained at Nancy with the rest of Lord Montagu's servants for some weeks, they said, before they heard of that nobleman's capture. After the news reached them a week was spent, according to Jacques Beaupré, in active deliberations ; at the end of which, as they had a sufficiency of money, their wages having been paid for some time in advance, it was determined to stay quietly where they were till they received some orders. One or two of their comrades, however, dropped off from time to time, till the two Frenchmen and young Free-land only remained of the whole party. For week

after week no news came, but at length, some four days previous to that on which they spoke, a messenger had arrived from Lord Montagu announcing his liberation, and bearing funds to pay all expenses. At the same time they said Master Freeland was ordered to give them their discharge, and they were actually on their way back to their own part of France.

"And so his lordship is liberated," said Edward with a slight touch of bitterness in his tone; for he could not imagine such an event to have happened so suddenly that Montagu, who had found time to take care of common servants, had none to bestow a thought on him. "You are going back to Aunis, you say. Well, my good fellows, if you have a mind for such a companion, I will go with you. I will be no charge to you, for I have enough with me. All I want is a horse and some arms."

"Charge, Master Ned," exclaimed Pierrot in a burst of semi-drunken enthusiasm. "What

care we about charges. If it were the last crown I had in the world I would share it with you. And as to a horse, here just get upon mine. I can walk well enough to that big village, which they say is called Vitell. But here, let me take the pistols out of the holsters. I wont trust you with them, by the Lord."

"Nonsense," answered Edward, "I will not use them, man, upon my honour."

"No, no," said Pierrot, deliberately taking the pistols from his saddle bow, "if once you get your hand upon the stock, there is no knowing where the bullets may go flying; and my legs have got lead enough in them already, this morning."

"Your head has got brandy enough in it," said Jacques Beaupré, "that's what puts the lead in your heels. Here, let me hold the horse while your young Master mounts, or you will be down with your nose in the water, and set the fountian boiling."

"If all the water in the world could wash it

white," answered Pierrot, "I would tumble into a pond every day. It is that nose of mine gets me a bad reputation, and makes men say I drink. Why every man drinks. It entirely depends upon what men drink. But after all, I think I had better try the cold water; for somehow, I have a notion if I try to walk to Vitell, with nothing but brandy in my stomach, I shall make the distance three times as long, with zig zags and varieties."

Thus saying, while Edward mounted, very well pleased with some relief to his tired legs, Pierrot knelt down by the side of a tolerably deep little pool, formed by the rivulet at the side of the road, and putting his lips to the clear water, took a deep draught. Jacques Beaupré, however, seemed to think that the water had better be applied externally also, and giving him a push with his foot, sent him headlong into the pool.

The good man started up with a furious look; but we have already seen the singular effect which liquor had upon Pierrot la Grange—an

effect quite contrary to that which it produces on most men. The reader will not be surprised then that, though really angry, Pierrot sought no vengeance upon his assailant.

Had we time, and were it worth while, I might be inclined to examine psychologically into this peculiarity of Pierrot's idiosyncrasy ; but suffice it to say that the result probably proceeded from one of two causes. Nothing cowers like shame, carried to a certain degree ; and Pierrot at heart was always ashamed of being drunk. On the other hand, as when he did drink, he never stopped at that point where liquor merely exhilarates ; but generally went far enough to deprive both brain and limbs of vigour, he might feel very doubtful of his capability, to combat an enemy even much weaker than himself.

However that might be his immersion in cold water produced its usual effect. I would not say that it sobered him entirely—that would be too much ; but it certainly greatly relieved his head, and gave his limbs a capability of direct

progression, which they had not previously possessed.

"Come, come, Pierrot," said Edward, interrupting him in the midst of terrible threats against Jacques, "we have no time to lose, my good friend; did I not tell you that it is likely that I shall be pursued at once? We must get to the village, as fast as possible; and then ride hard for the rest of the day, in order to put as great a distance between us and Coiffy as we can."

"Go on then, go on," cried Pierrot, "I will come after you as fast as I can; you can be buying a horse and arms in the mean time, if you can find them. If not I suppose you must take to *franc etrier*."

Edward took him at his word, and accompanied by Jacques Beaupré, rode on, running over in his mind, with his usual quickness, his chances of escape, and the best means of securing it. He did not know indeed, how far the local jurisdiction, either as seigneur or gov-

ernment officer, of the Count de Bourbonne extended, but he felt certain that, if he could once get beyond its limits no other governor or government officer would recognize it, in opposition to the safe conduct under the Cardinal's own hand, which he still carried about him. Speed, therefore, was every thing, and though he had neither whip nor spur with him, his light hand and thorough horsemanship easily kept Pierrot's horse at a swift trot, till they reached the village of Vitell. Most villages have always possessed a tolerable inn, though the external man was sometimes not so well provided as the internal. But what Edward principally wanted at that moment was generally in those days to be found in almost any part of France. People then almost universally travelled on horseback, and very rarely went without arms. Pistols and a good sword therefore were soon found in Vitell; but a horse took longer to obtain, not from any want of the commodity; for there were plenty of very excellent nags in that town;

but from the invariable and unextinguishable propensity inherent in horse dealers to cheat the chapman, and never to sell a good horse under any circumstances, if they can sell a bad one. Six were brought in succession to the door of the inn for Edward's inspection, without remaining for more than a minute before he ordered them away. At length, however, one of the dealers, perceiving that he had not to do with a novice, as Edward's youth had at first led him to imagine, thought fit to bring forth from the stable a beast, which though not very handsome and somewhat vicious—if not so great a devil, as that which Edward rode from Angers—was a good serviceable beast enough. All these things cost but a small sum, compared with the price which we should pay for them in the present day ; and bridle, saddle, and a pair of spurs were quite within the young gentleman's means.

Pierrot had arrived in time to give his opinion in regard to the purchase of the horse, and as

he was now sober, that opinion was worth having. But the first moment he found himself alone with his former master, he was eloquent in his excuses for his relapse ; and Edward could not but admit to himself that, left alone in a great city, where he knew no one, uncertain of his fate from day to day, and with sufficient money, no poor sinner had ever better cause to plead temptation.

The young Englishman contented himself, however, with telling him, that as he was no longer his servant, he could pretend to no control over his conduct.

“ Ah, Master Ned,” cried the honest fellow, “do not say I am no longer your servant ! Pray do control me. I am sure I cannot control myself. You are the only one who ever could, and I do believe, if I could but stay with you for a couple of years, I should get over my bad habits. See what an effect good training had all the time I was at Nancy, I declare I did not drink two quarts till this very morning. Ask

Jacques Beaupré ; he will tell you the same ; and if you will but let me serve you for two years, you may read my name backwards if I ever drink again."

"I am afraid, my good friend," answered Edward, "you would always be what the catholics call a relapsed convert. As to your serving me two years, Pierrot, God knows what will become of me before two years are over, and in the mean time I have little enough money for myself, and none to keep a man upon."

"Well, well," cried Pierrot joyfully, "I will run fortune with you! Only don't send me away, and don't fire at me any more, unless you see me drunk, when it will be natural—but now tell me, Master Ned, where are you going now?"

"Into the lion's den, Pierrot," replied Edward, with a somewhat rueful smile, "I am going straight to the Cardinal de Richelieu."

"In the name of heaven!" exclaimed Pierrot with a look of astonishment, "do you know he

is now besieging Rochelle, with a powerful army? The king has fallen sick and gone back to Paris. The Cardinal has tucked up his gown and turned soldier; and our poor friends in the city are already, they say, so badly off for food, that they will soon have to eat each other. The Cardinal will not let a mouse stir out; and if any one ventures beyond the walls, they send a shot at him and drive him in again."

Edward mused without reply for some moments; and, while he was still silent, Jacques Beaupré came back to the little *salle a manger* and stood by the young gentleman's side.

"Poor Clement Tournon." cried Edward still musing.

"Ay, poor Clement Tournon"! said Jacques Beaupré, in a sad tone, "He is a good man, Sir, and took care of me from by boyhood."

"I would give the world to save him," said Edward—"come, let us ride."

They were soon after upon their horses,

Edward mounted first, and Pierrot last ; having stopped to answer some question of the host.

“What did he ask you?” said Edward, as they rode on.

“He asked me where your lordship was going,” answered Pierrot. “And I told him straight to the Cardinal.”

“Right,” said Edward ; “and did he call me lordship, Pierrot? My lordship is a very small one.”

“Ay, sir ; but you have got quite a grand air now, though your doublet is somewhat soiled by dust and wet. You cannot think how you are changed since we left Nantes. What between riding, and getting stuck, and being in prison, you have grown broad and brown, and your moustache is an inch long. Those who saw you before would never know you.”

“I hope they will ;” answered Edward with a smile, followed by a sigh, “and as for my doublet, I must get a new one whenever I can

afford to stop without danger. All my baggage I left with the discreet Monsieur de Bourbonne ; but if I am not mistaken, Pierrot, I will make him pay all he owes me before I have done."

"At the pistol's point?" asked Pierrot with a grim smile.

"No, no;" replied Edward, "in another way and by other hands—but let us ride on fast ; for I have a great notion the news you left with the aubergist will sharpen the spurs of any who may be pursuing me."

The whole party accordingly rode forward more quickly, but not at so headlong a pace as to risk any damage to their horses ; and before night all fear of pursuit was ended by their entrance into another province, where at a small walled town, which they reached just after sunset, Edward was obliged to produce his safe conduct, before the soldiers of the gates would give them admission.

The officer, to whom it was shown, at the first sight of the broad seal of France, and the

name of Richelieu, respectfully came out of the guard house to bid the bearer welcome, and asked with great politeness where he was going to lodge in the town; and whither his journey was directed.

"I am going straight to Rochelle, or wherever his Eminence of Richelieu may be," replied the young Englishman. "As to the place where I shall lodge, I shall be glad of advice; for I am a stranger here, and must depart early to-morrow."

"Your horses look tired, Sir," said the officer, "you had better give them some rest."

"No wonder they are tired," replied the young man, "for we have ridden from the frontiers of Loraine, where I was somewhat badly treated—lost all my baggage, but luckily saved my purse."

"By brigands," asked the officer.

"No better," answered Edward somewhat bitterly; "but may I ask you the way to the best inn."

The officer, all politeness, sent one of the soldiers to show him the way ; and in a large comfortable, though somewhat gloomy old *auberge*, the young Englishman passed the first night for several months with a feeling of freedom and security.

CHAPTER V.

WE left Edward Langdale at nightfall, and by the reader's good leave may as well take him up again about the same hour, but with an interval of some ten days. The interval measured upon the earth's surface must be equally great. When we last saw him he was entering a little town on the frontiers of Burgundy, just after the cool sunset of a chilly spring day. He was now riding out of the fine old town of Niort,

after a warm day's journey ; for even under the genial sky of France, ten days will make a great difference, and bring the mild breath of the South to warm the flowers, though winter even there will sometimes linger in the lap of spring.

“ Well, Sir,” said Jacques Beaupré, who was a good deal tired with a longer day's ride than usual. “ Everybody says you will find the town full of soldiers ; and we all know where fighting men are, there is no room for civil men.”

“ We will find room, Jacques,” replied Edward, in a light, confident tone, “ and as to civility, if we don't how ourselves too militant the fighting men will be civil enough, depend on it. But, my good friend, I must if possible see the Cardinal to-morrow. They tell me that an assault upon Rochelle will be made shortly ; and if I could but get into the town for a few hours.”

Jacques Beaupré shook his head, saying, “ Ah, Sir, it is all in vain. I will go as far to

help poor old Clement Tournon as any man, but the good old squire is most likely dead of starvation by this time, and if he is not, you might as well try to persuade a cat to let a mouse get out of her jaws as attempt to persuade his Eminence to let one single soul, old or young, to get out of Rochelle."

"I will try at all events," answered Edward. "He who makes no effort never succeeds. He who makes an effort may fail, but he may succeed. The man who helped me at my utmost need shall never say that I did not try to help him when he was in a harder scrape. Ride on, ride on, we have still three leagues to go."

The twilight grew fainter as they went; and it was quite dark when they emerged from the little wood which lies about a quarter of a league from the small old town of Fontenay, then universally called Rohan-Rohan. It is now a mere insignificant Burgh, but in those times and in the time before, it was a small city of some importance, if not for its commerce,

at least for its capabilities for defence. It had even ventured a short time before to set at defiance the arms of France, and had made an obstinate resistance, but having fallen at length had suffered severely from the captors.

It was night, as I have said, when Edward and his two companions first came within sight, and very little of the place would have been visible, had not a large body of men, which formed the rear-guard of the royal army, been marched out some days before and encamped a mile beyond the town. Every one who has seen a camp must have remarked how much more light finds its way to the sky from amongst the tents, in the early part of the night, than arises from amongst the houses in a city, though perhaps much more populous ; and how the blaze from watch-fires and lamps and torches, threw out the dark masses of the town of Rohan-Rohan, with its fine old castle in strong relief.

It is rarely that the rear of an army is guarded

with so much care as its van. Few Captains are as careful as Earl Percy. But in this case negligence was more excusable ; for no one in all the camp ever dreamt of such a thing as an attack in the rear. Moreover, to say the truth, that rear-guard in advance of Rohan-Rohan was composed of a somewhat disorderly set, gentlemen and soldiers alike, not one of whom wished particularly to see the fall of Rochelle.

To explain the cause of this indifference would take up too much time ; but the words of Bassompierre reveals the fact when he said, " You will see we shall be fools enough to take Rochelle."

However that might be, Edward and his companions had passed the centre of the town, before they saw a single soldier. It was badly lighted it is true, but the cause of their not seeing any was that there were none to be seen. The young gentleman looked for guard or picket, or patrol in vain, till he arrived within a hundred yards of the end of the street which

leads from Pont de Cosse to the Castle. There, however, he was challenged for the first time; one of a group of musketeers, who were drinking at the door of a house, starting up and demanding the pass-word.

Edward, unable to give it, requested to see the man's officer, and was led unceremoniously into the house, where he found an old grey-headed gentleman seated reading, with his steel cap upon the table. To him the young gentleman's errand was soon explained, and his safe conduct exhibited.

"I cannot let you pass, young gentleman, without further orders," said the old man, "but if you will wait here for an hour, I will send on your name and the description of your pass to our Commander. He will soon let us hear from him. I am rather curiously situated myself, and therefore must be careful."

"I must wait the leisure of the King's officer," answered Edward, in a civil tone, "but in the meanwhile perhaps my two men, who are

without, can get some forage for the horses, and some food for themselves. I have not seen an inn open in the whole place."

"I suppose not," said the old officer, drily, "but some of my people will easily find for yours what they want. Pray be seated, and wait till my return."

He was not gone more than five minutes, and then about an hour passed in broken and desultory conversation between him and his visitor, whom he treated with every sort of distinction ; for by this time Edward was once more equipped in the garments of a gentleman of the Court, which were none the less gentlemanly for being plain and sober. Some of the old man's questions and observations seemed to his young companion somewhat strange : he asked if Edward had met any parties of armed men on the road, how long he had travelled, which way he had come ; and remarked that this siege was a weary business, but that the Cardinal was determined to carry Rochelle whatever it might cost.

Edward replied as shortly as politeness permitted, and only put a few questions in return, amongst them, however, he enquired who was the officer commanding the troops in front, and heard with sensations, not altogether pleasant, that his name was Monsieur de Lude, into whose hands he had fallen once before.

At the end of an hour he was relieved however; for a soldier entering the room with every appearance of haste, gave a letter into the hands of the old officer, who opened and read it with a good deal of merriment.

"Monsieur de Lude tells me," he said, "to present his compliments to Monsieur de Langdale, and inform him that I cannot let him pass the post till I have the Cardinal's permission, which I have no doubt will be given as soon as he hears his name—shall I read the rest?" asked the old officer.

Edward nodded, and he went on thus: "I got into a devil of a scrape last summer about him and a girl he had with him. Who

the mischief he is I don't know, but by what the Cardinal said when I saw him, I think he must be his Eminence's pet cat turned into a cavalier. On your life be as civil to him as possible, give him the best rooms in the Castle, and feed and drink him well, till I can come over myself, which will be as soon as I hear from the Cardinal to-morrow. I am half afraid to stop him; but what can I do? The orders are strict not to let any one pass the posts, because — the rest," continued the old man abruptly, "refers to matters of no consequence. You will find the rooms of the Castle very comfortable, for they were inhabited by the Duc de Rohan but a few weeks before we sat down before the place, and some of the old servants have been suffered to remain till the King's pleasure is known—heaven grant there be no ghosts there to disturb you, though there are some strange tales, as in regard to every old country house."

"I am not afraid of anything unsubstantial," answered Edward, "Do you know what has become of the Duc de Rohan?"

“No, not rightly,” replied the old officer, with some slight hesitation. “They did say he was threatening the right flank of the army with a body of horse ; but he must have found out by this time it was of no use. Men must submit to circumstances, sir. But let us go, I will have the honour of escorting you. We shall find your servants somewhere about ;” and, calling aloud for torches, he led the way out of the low house where he had taken up his quarters, and gave some orders to the men about the door.

Before the torches were lighted, and Edward Langdale and his companion, with the two men before them, had proceeded one hundred yards up the hill, Jacques Beaupré and Pierrot had joined them, leading the horses. In sooth the party proceeded exceedingly slowly ; and it took a full quarter of an hour to reach the gates of the chateau. All watch and ward was gone ; and at the inner door of the lodging part of the building, appeared a tremulous old man with a candle in his hand. The old officer called him

"Matthew," as if they had been long acquainted, and ordered him briefly to pay every attention to the guest, and give him the best chambers in the house.

"Those are the Duchess' apartments," said the old Major Domo, "we will have a fire lighted in a moment, gentlemen; but I fear me there is not much in the house to eat. However, I will tell old Henri Borgne, who was cook here before Maitre Grondins' father came, to get something ready with all speed."

"No, no," said the old officer, "this gentleman is not fond of ante-deluvian sauces. I will make shift to send him up a roast chicken and a pottage. We are not particularly well off for provisions down below, but I can find something, and I think, Matthew, you can find the wine."

"Hush, hush, sir," said the old man, in a low voice, "if your soldiers did but hear."

"I will break the first man's neck that climbs the hill," replied the officer.

"I want nothing," said Edward, "we supped at Cossé, and my men have taken care of themselves below, depend upon it. Where is the Duchess now, Monsieur Matthew, and who has she got with her?"

"Oh, she is in Venice still," replied the old man, "and there are Madame St. Aignan and Mademoiselle de Mirepoix, and three or four maids and the serving men. Do you know her, sir? She is a fine lady and mighty gay."

"I have not the honour," said Edward, "but now, my good man, let the fire be lighted. I shall go to bed soon, for I have ridden long and hard. "I trust," he continued, addressing the old officer, "that Monsieur de Lude will communicate my coming to his Eminence as soon as possible, for it is very necessary that I should see him without delay."

"Be you sure he will do that," replied the other, "de Lude is not a man to burn his fingers twice with the same chestnut."

He then took his leave : the old servant with

the candle marshalled the way ceremoniously to a very splendid suite of apartments, which had escaped, I know not how, from the rude hands of the soldiers when the town was taken ; Pierrot and Jacques Beaupré disposed of themselves doubtless very comfortably ; and Edward sat down to meditate. The reader need not ask what was the subject of his thoughts, if he remembers that those were the halls and dwelling place of the ancestors of Lucette.

Was it a dream, he asked himself. Hardly nine months before had he passed with her not many miles from that very spot ? had they wandered alone together for weeks without restraint ? had they borne suffering, anxiety, danger in dear companionship which made even danger sweet ; had they been married, parted, met again and again parted ?

There are times when a sensation of the unreality of all things upon this earth comes over us—when memory seems but a dream, our past acts a vision, our hopes, our fears, our enjoyments but the fancies of the fleeting hour

For an instant it was so with Edward Langdale as he sat and gazed into the flickering and phantasm-begetting fire. But when he turned his eyes around upon those old walls whose scrolls, and sconces, and fantastic ornaments spoke of the past, all told that he was in the dwelling of the Rohan-Rohans—the strange shadowy doubts vanished, he felt that there was something real in the world—something more real than mere tangible objects—that if all else died or passed away like a show the realities of heart and mind must remain for ever—esteem, affection, love—that truth, honesty, and honour, genius and wisdom, can never perish.

How long he sat he knew not, but his meditations were interrupted by the old servant bringing in fresh wood, with a man from the town below bearing a tray of provisions.

The former he was glad to have, for the night had grown chilly, but the latter he sent away to Pierrot and Beaupré, bidding them eat and go to rest as he wanted nothing more. The old man after reverent offers of service put some

fresh candles into the sconces and left him, assuring him that he should have had candlesticks—fine silver flambeaus—but that they had been taken away.

Edward left alone began to pace up and down the room. He looked at the bed which seemed comfortable enough, and thought of lying down, but he had no inclination to sleep. The chamber was a square room in an angle of the tower, one side looking to the south and the other to the east. The windows were without blinds or shutters. Edward advanced to one on the southern side, from which there was a view over a considerable part of the camp. The glow which had risen in that direction some hours before had considerably diminished; the watch fires were dying out, the torches no longer moved about from place to place. He lifted his eyes to the sky studded with stars, and saw a planet with a pure mild light moving upward untwinkling amongst the more steadfast watchers of the night.

“Can there be any truth,” he thought, “in those tales of the astrologers? Can the fate of many men, of many nations, depend upon the course of such a pale silent orb as that,” and turning to the table again he sat down and let his thoughts run on in the new course they had assumed. Every thing grew more silent around him, the village clock struck. He did not count its sounds, but he felt it must be near midnight.

Who can tell what it is which, when alone and in silence, at that still spectral hour, seems to chill the warm blood of the heart, and fill the brain with ideas vague, and awful, and sublime—with fancies gloomy if not fearful? Edward sat thoughtfully for nearly half an hour longer. The fire had fallen low, and he rose and threw some more wood upon it; but it would not burn. He then walked to the other window which looked eastward. The moon was just rising, and he could see over a wide extent of country, with the wood which he had passed on his way to

Fontenay, on the left of the picture,—then half a mile or so of open sandy ground; then another wood to the right; and further still, on the same side, but more distant, the spires and towers of some other little town. There was the haziness of moonlight over the whole scene; but the moon, though she was strong enough to cast long shadows from every elevated object, so flooded the whole with light that the more distant features of the scene were not distinct.

Suddenly Edward raised his hand half open to his brow, and gazed from underneath. He saw something that surprized him; a dark figure issued from the wood, more followed; line after line of black soldier-like phantoms swept over the sandy ground, from the one wood towards the other, disappearing as they entered. But still more followed, horse and foot. They seemed to be a moving host; but there was something so quiet and gliding in their motions, that Edward could hardly believe they were substantial. He opened the

window quietly and listened. There was no noise: there was no beat of drum or sound of fife, or clang of arms, or tramp of marching men. Yet still the line went on, troop after troop, and squadron after squadron in the same silent stealthy way, and where he stood he could discern no shadows cast by the moon from the passing multitude.

At length he thought that fatigue must have affected his mind or body strangely, and retiring from the window he closed it and lay down to sleep without undressing.

His eyes closed heavily in a few minutes, but ere an hour was over, he started up and gazed around him, wondering where he was. Then as remembrance came back he approached the window again and looked out, the moon was higher in the heaven and shining with great splendour; but the phantom host had disappeared, and nothing was to be seen but the misty landscape and the shadows of the trees.

CHAPTER VI.

THERE was a loud knocking in the old castle of Rohan-Rohan, about half-past four o'clock in the morning, and then various other sounds, which seemed to indicate that people had been roused from their beds by some unusual summons. Horses' feet were heard stamping in the courtyard too, and two or three persons talking below the windows; and Edward rose up, pulled on his boots, and lighted another candle in one

of the sconces which was nearly extinguished. In those days people were more matutinal in their habits than in our times, but still half-past four was a somewhat early hour ; and Edward had not slept well or long. He was bathing his face and head, however, in cold water, to waken up his sleepy faculties, when some one knocked at the door of his room. He bade them come in ; and old Matthew, with the inevitable candle in his hand, entered, introducing a young man in military attire who, having satisfied himself of Edward's name, presented a letter bearing his address.

The young Englishman opened it, and approaching the light, read the contents.

“ Monsieur de Lude begs to inform Monsieur de Langdale, that his Eminence will receive him this morning half an hour before day break. The bearer will be his guide to the quarters of his Eminence.”

“ We have hardly time,” said Edward.

“ Oh, yes,” answered the other, with a smile.

“The Cardinal sometimes keeps people waiting, and I took the liberty of ordering your people and your horses to be brought forth wherever they might be.”

“Thanks for the precaution,” said Edward, looking at his watch, and shrewdly suspecting that the messenger had somewhere dallied on the way. “It wants now a quarter to five o’clock, I will not detain you a moment, sir;” and, catching up his beaver and his cloak, and a few other articles that lay about his room, he descended into the courtyard; taking an opportunity of slipping some money into the hands of the old servant.

Pierrot was already there with two horses, and Jacques Beaupré appeared the instant after, leading the other. No time was lost, and Edward was immediately in the saddle. Three or four troopers followed, and the whole party set out down the steep streets from the Castle towards the Pont de Cosse.

Edward asked no questions as to the course

in which their ride was directed ; and hardly a word passed between him and his companion as they trotted briskly on. The fact was, the young man's mind was full of the coming interview. On some points his determination was formed ; but upon others he was doubtful. To tell all that had happened at Coiffy he was resolved, and to demand redress ; but turn it in his thoughts as he would, he could fix upon no way before hand of introducing his proposed visit to Rochelle ; and in the end he was obliged to leave it to chance and circumstances.

Very little of the country did he see as they rode on, for the fading moonlight was checkered with cloudy shadows and faint gleams ; and deep shades, and hazy hollows and brown knolls, were all that caught the eye as the travellers passed along.

At length, after several miles' ride, a gleam of light rested for a moment or two upon a little elevation and on the walls of an old castle ; not unlike that of Rohan-Rohan, and the young of-

ficer by Edward's side pointed forward, saying, "There is Mauzé, where his Eminence has passed the last four days."

"How far is it?" said Edward.

About two miles," replied the young man, "but we shall soon be there. The road is good and even."

The light passed away, and Edward caught no other distinct view of the chateau till about twenty minutes after they began to ascend the little slope. He then perceived a red and garish light ascending from amidst some old walls, and in a minute more was in the courtyard, where a number of torches were burning, and a number of men and horses were collected.

"Stay here," said the young officer, "I will go and announce you," and, leaving him there, he entered the chateau.

He had not been gone two minutes, however, when there was a bustle on the steps of the great hall, and some six or seven persons came forth with a tall fine-looking man at their head,

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habited certainly more in military than ecclesiastical costume ; for though he had a loose scarlet robe thrown over his shoulders, there was the gleam of a cuirass underneath, and he bore a heavy sword by his side. Edward pushed his horse forward, seeing at once it was the Cardinal ; but the great minister was evidently fully occupied. He spoke a few words to one of the little crowd which surrounded him, gave some papers to another, listened for a moment to a third, and then mounted a powerful charger which was held for him at the foot of the steps. His fine, but somewhat stern face, was full of thought ; and the glare of the torches gave it even a look of harshness which Edward had never remarked there before. His eye turned upon every body around, and rested longer perhaps on the face of Edward Langdale than upon that of any other, though he did not seem to recognise him, and probably only remarked him because he remained on horseback while all the rest were on foot.

"Follow," said Richelieu, and rode away, while a faint tinge of grey began to spread itself through the dark sky, announcing the coming sun-rise.

As the party rode on, Edward remarked that Richelieu spoke a few words to those immediately about him, and presently after, one of them fell back to his side and asked if his name was Langdale. He answered in the affirmative, and the gentleman then told him to ride up near to his Eminence. Edward did so, but the Cardinal took no notice, and continued to push on at a quick pace till they reached the top of one of those abrupt little eminences, which are scattered over the flatter ground upon the western coast of France. Upon the very summit Richelieu pulled in his horse, and by this time the pale bluish moonlight had gained sufficient strength to shew the brown moors and yellow sands, and the towers and pinnacles of Rochelle, with a gleam of the sea beyond. An odour of sea-weed also came sweeping up from the north-west,

and a saltish taste was felt upon the lips of those who sat there and gazed.

“Edward Langdale!” said Richelieu, after a moment or two; and Edward spurred his horse up to his side.

“You have kept your word in coming back,” said the Cardinal, “but you have come sooner than I expected.”

“That was because your Eminence did not know all the circumstances,” answered the young man, with that mixture of frankness and respect which is always pleasing to the great.

Richelieu raised what was then called a perspective glass, a very feeble sort of telescope, to his eye, and gazed towards Rochelle, the long lines of which were becoming more distinct every moment. Edward was silent, seeing that the mind of the great Minister was fully occupied; and no one spoke a word for nearly ten minutes. Then occurred one of those phenomena, by no means uncommon and easily accounted for in these days, but to which the

superstition of old times lent a significance they do not now possess. Away out to the east the sun began to rise, somewhat pale and sickly in look, and with a whitish glare around him, while in the west, rising over the sea, appeared another sun, exactly of the same aspect and keeping, as it ascended the same height in the sky.

“Two suns in the same heaven!” exclaimed Richelieu, with an accent of surprise.

“Yes, your Eminence,” replied Edward, “but one is much brighter than the other, and its light will last after the other has gone out.”

Richelieu turned suddenly round, and gazed in his face, with an enquiring look, as if he thought there might be something beneath his words more significant than the words themselves, then bowing his head, with a well-pleased smile, he said “True, true! one is fading already.”

Whether Edward had spoken to his thoughts or not, may be—must be, always a mystery; but it is certain that minds of great fire and eagerness, even without much fancy, will snatch at

images supplied by external nature, to figure forth without danger, thoughts, dreams, purposes in their own hearts, which they dare not utter. The parable is always a resource of ambition, and often a resource of love. Certain it is too that there were at that time two suns in the sky of France, and that one was already fading into an obscurity, becoming darker and more dark, till the faint figure of the dying Monarch was hardly seen or felt ; while the other was destined to go on increasing in splendour and power till it set for ever. Here the comparison may be supposed to halt ; for some may say that the real sun was fading, while the false one was increasing in splendour. But that depends after all upon how men appreciate greatness—whether genius or birth be the real sun. However that may be, it is certain that Louis the thirteenth was at all events endowed with military genius ; but even the splendour of that most dazzling—in the eyes of men—of human gifts, his rays were paling before the superior endowments of his minister. Sickness, weariness,

ness, disgust, despondency—we know not well what had already induced him to withdraw from the siege of Rochelle, and to leave Richelieu to carry on the operations with a force and energy, a talent which would have won fame for the most distinguished general or engineer. The Cardinal might well, therefore, apply the words of Edward Langdale to himself, feeling them a compliment which, like the misty light of a summer's day, was the more warm because it was in some degree indefinite. The Cardinal did not wish to have it otherwise, and without further words, turned his eyes once more upon the scene before them. A small battery opened its fire upon the walls of the devoted town as they sat there and gazed; but nobody could see whether it produced any effect or not, Richelieu at all events paid little attention to it, and only murmured to himself, "Waste of saltpetre!" shortly after he sent off two gentlemen on horseback, with messages written in pencil on small scraps of paper, and then turned to gaze again. Some five

minutes after a man on horseback came galloping up from the rear, and gave him some information in a low voice. For a moment or two his brow contracted as if with anger, but the emotion lasted evidently but a moment; for the next instant he smiled almost gaily, and he said aloud, "Well, one may have too many rats in a rat trap! Monsieur Langdale, come hither."

Edward rode close up, and the Cardinal asked "Do you know any thing of the Duc de Rohan?"

"No, your Eminence," replied Edward, "I have not seen or heard of him for nearly nine months."

"You did not see him last night?" said Richelieu.

"The Duc de Rohan!" said Edward, in a tone of surprise, "I passed all last night, sir, in the Chateau of Fontenay, but the Duc certainly was not there to my knowledge."

"Nevertheless," said Richelieu in a quiet tone, "he passed from right to left of our

army in the rear with his whole force—so I understand.”

“Now I comprehend what I saw last night,” said Edward ; and he detailed all he had observed from the window of the Chateau.

“It was no phantom,” said Richelieu gravely, “but it is as well. I wonder if there were other people in the town or castle who took men for shadows as well as you. How long are you from Savoy where I last heard of you ?”

“A long time, may it please your Eminence,” replied the young Englishman ; “but only ten days from the Chateau of Coiffy where you certainly should have heard of me if they had not debarred me the use of pen and ink, and kept me a close prisoner for months.”

“Ha !” said the Minister with a grave stern face, “Monsieu de Bourbonne thinks he can play with me, does he. And now he fancies he has got his reward—but we must talk more of this when I have some leisure. At present that little black line there,” he continued point-

ing towards Rochelle, "occupies much of my thoughts. The battery has not yet ceased firing. These men of trumpet and broad sword, Monsieur de Langdale, attribute more virtue to gunpowder and cannon balls than I do, there are much more efficient elements in war."

"Indeed, your Eminence," said Edward, "may I ask what?"

"The impudent young cur," said one of the old officers near, to another, in a low voice, "talks to the Cardinal as if he was his bottle companion."

Richelieu answered calmly but with emphasis. "A pickaxe and a shovel, followed up by the movements of those two great officers, Pestilence and Famine. When you announced in Rochelle, Master de Langdale, the coming of Lord Denbigh's fleet, and those wise men of the east refused to receive it in their port, they little thought, I ween, that those two great officers would be so soon amongst them. But how was it," he continued, changing his tone

and speaking rapidly, "that they dared in such perilous circumstances to send away King Charles' ships upon the pretext that they had not been warned, when you yourself had warned them?"

"Your Eminence's pardon," answered Edward. "But Master Jargeau, who of course told you all this, should also have said that I had not been an hour in Rochelle before I had my head broken and lay for near a week incapable of delivering any of my letters. It was a pretext, as your Eminence calls it; but the Rochellois had really not been warned when Lord Denbigh's fleet arrived."

"You are mistaken, young man," said Richelieu with a slight curl of the lip, "you jump at your conclusions too rapidly. There have been more Jargeaus than one in Rochelle, and this one, though a very serviceable fellow, I am told, never saw me in his life. Ay it is a pity, that he would not keep his neck out of the noose, but he forced us to hang him, which was

some loss to the King's service. He was in the case of those men who as scriptures say are exceedingly fond of serving both God and Mammon. God abandoned him and Mammon could not save him, for though he offered Bassompierre the whole value of a cargo of fish he had contrived to get into Rochelle, and every fish was worth an ounce of gold, be it remarked, Bassompierre, whose intelligence is very good, seized the gold where he had hid it, and hanged him according to proclamation."

All this was said with great coolness and deliberation, and from time to time the great minister raised his glass to his eye and gazed at the battery which had not yet ceased firing. He waited some ten minutes more and then beckoned up some of the superior officers round him, asking if they thought his messenger had not had time to reach the lines. They all agreed that there had been plenty of time, but one of them added in a careless tone, "It is possible, your Eminence, that he may not have

carried either his head or his message with him. There has been a puff or two of smoke from the walls, and nobody can tell where the shot may have gone. A man may have a tierce major in his favour and yet lose the game after all."

"Possibly," replied Richelieu, and then resumed his watch. During some five minutes after, the line of battery shewed no more smoke or fire, the wreaths of sulphurous vapor circled away, the town also ceased firing, and the whole scene lay quiet and peaceful beneath their eyes, and nothing was seen but a few horsemen riding about with one apart from the rest galloping quickly up towards the hill on which they were.

The Cardinal awaited his arrival and put some questions, which Edward Langdale, who had fallen a little back, did not hear.

"In five days, your Eminence," replied the officer aloud. "He says that, at present, no boat bigger than a cockle-shell can get in or out

and unless there be a very high tide or a gale of wind the place will be sealed up as tight as a bottle of old Burgundy."

"Well," said Richelieu, "it is well. Have they made no attempt to interrupt the works?"

"None whatever, your Eminence," replied the other, "they are trusting to God's good providence and a high tide—doubtless praying in all their temples for storm and tempest with profound devotion; but the devil and the wind do not seem inclined to help them, and the poor creatures whom they drove out have been received into the town again to eat them up, so that they cannot hold out many weeks longer."

The Cardinal smiled, and turning his horse rode slowly back towards the Chateau of Mauzé without saying a word to any one, and seemingly buried in profound thought.

Edward Langdale followed, not knowing well what to do, and not one word did Richelieu speak to him or any one till they reached the gates leading into the court yard; the Cardi-

nal dismounted and entered the building followed by some of his immediate attendants ; the military scattered in different directions, each to his own quarters without taking any notice whatever of the young stranger, and Edward remained upon his horse in the court yard, while a curious smile upon his lip, and a raising of the eye brows of Jacques Beaupré, read an unpleasant commentary upon his disappointed expectations.

“ You must seek lodgings in the little town, Pierrot,” said Lord Montagu’s page, “ get the best you can, though bad I fancy will be the best, and make some arrangement for obtaining food. We must have something to eat though the poor folks in Rochelle are worse off than we it would seem.”

“ It is a small place, Mauzé, sir, and quite full of soldiery,” said Pierrot, “ but I will do my best and get something at all events ; for I know some of the people here who I think

would kill a hog for me, if we can do no better, but I am afraid quarters will be worse to find than rations."

"We must seek for both," answered Edward; "and something for the horses too."

He was turning towards the gates again to ride down the slope into the little town or rather village—for it was no better then—when a man, dressed in a dark suit and bearing somewhat the appearance of a servant, came down the steps and approached the young gentleman's horse. "His Eminence the Cardinal de Richelieu," he said in a low sweet voice, "has commanded me to tell Monsieur de Langdale that he will see him as soon as the business of the day is over—about nine o'clock to-night. In the meantime I will shew Monsieur de Langdale a chamber, somewhat high up it is true, but the castle is very full. Monsieur de Langdale will take his meals with the officers of the Cardinal's guard. His servants must pro-

vide for themselves in the village as we have no room ; the Cardinal allows them a crown a day as livery."

Edward dismounted and followed him to a chamber convenient enough, though very near the top of the main tower, and knowing the policy of saying as little as possible in such places, he only asked if at nine o'clock he should present himself before the Cardinal, or if his Eminence would summon him.

"He did not say," replied the man; "but Monsieur had better go to the ante-chamber at that hour and speak with the almoner, whom he will find there." Thus saying he left him, seemingly as much indisposed to say a word more than was necessary as Edward could be himself.

The reader may probably have no great opinion, from the facts already related in this true history, of Edward Langdale's prudence, but as I have shown he had been undergoing for the last nine months a course of discipline, under which he had greatly improved. Much

was at stake at that moment, and he resolved to act as cautiously as possible ; and during the whole morning he never quitted the chamber which had been assigned to him, passing the time partly in sleep, partly in deep meditation over the character of the great Minister, which had now appeared to him in a new point of view. The coldness, the somewhat sarcastic indifference with which Richelieu had spoken of the hanging of the unfortunate Jargeau, and of the miseries of the people of Rochelle, would have given the impression that he was merely a hard selfish politician, had it not been for the deep emotions which had stirred him in the case of Chalais and the lighter and more graceful feelings which Edward had seen him display in their first interview.

It was matter of study for the young man, but as he thought over his own conduct he determined to make no change. He had hitherto followed the promptings of the moment, and he had acquired a conviction that with the

Cardinal unpremeditated frankness was the best policy.

He was still indulging in this strain of thought when a servant came to inform him that the officers of the Cardinal's guard were at dinner, and led him to the great hall, where he found a seat reserved for him at the table. There was no sympathy, however, between him and those with whom he had to associate for a few minutes ; they were civil, which was all he could expect, and hardly ten words passed his lips before he retired once more to his chamber.

CHAPTER VII.

It was night and the scene was a somewhat curious one. A large chamber with a vaulted roof, long square windows, and decorations neither new nor in a modern taste, a tall four-post bedstead with green velvet hangings a good deal tarnished, a brick floor well waxed and polished, an immense large armory or wardrobe quaintly carved, three or four tall straight backed chairs, and one large arm chair well stuffed, together

with a table of black oak, the legs of which were cut into the forms of some nondescript species of devil—not the conventional gentleman, with hoofs and tail and pitchfork ; but some body not a whit less hideous—presented the aspect of a chamber quite of the olden time ; it might be of the reign of Francis the first or Louis the twelfth.

All days have their olden times ; and I believe the olden times have always been praised ; such is the tendency of the human mind to regret. When we are school boys, we wish we were children again, and think of the caresses without the pangs and inconveniences of infancy ; when we are men, we wish we were school boys again, and forget the heavy task, the ferule and the rod ; old age looks back to youth, and sorrows over its lost powers, and only one man of whom I know has written in praise of life's declining stage, but even Cicero, upon such a theme, could only indite an eloquent lie.

Possession is always paid for by regret, and we take out the small change in hope.

Nevertheless, it would appear, notwithstanding the excellences of those old times, some improvements have been made in the march of society—at least in the manufacture of chairs. Although they were not famous for that fabric in Louis the thirteenth's time. Edward Langdale felt that seats were certainly much more inconvenient at a former period. "Men must once have had backbones of quite a different construction," he thought "they must have either been so supple as to bend into all kinds of corners, or as hard as not to care for any corners at all."

Such thoughts passed through his mind as he sat in a straight backed sort of rack in the castle of Mauzé, just opposite to the Cardinal de Richelieu, who having cast off cuirass and scarlet robe was seated in an easy gown of deep purple in that comfortable arm chair. The light fell upon his magnificent head and easy graceful figure from a sconce upon the wall,

and the fine flowing lines of the drapery and half concealed limbs, with the broad high forehead and slightly grey hair, gave him the look of some antique picture, and made the whole person harmonise well with the room in which he sat.

The figure of Edward Langdale would have spoiled all; for it was full of youth—I might almost have called it youngness—but, as I have said before, his garments, though cut in what was then the modern fashion, were all of a sober colour; and about the square brow, the delicately chiselled nose, and firm determined mouth there was an antique, if not a classical character.

With the cuirass and the scarlet robe Richelieu seemed to have cast off the heavy cares and hard sternness of the day, and with the satin pantoufles to have put on the ease and relaxation of spirit which no man enjoyed more intensely than himself, if we may believe the stray admissions even of his enemies and calumniators.

It is greatly to be regretted that Bois Robert did not write his history ; for although we might not have had a true picture of his many sided character, we should have had another, a more amiable, and perhaps even a grander view of the man than any historian has given us except by accident. He had sent for Edward Langdale about half an hour before the time he had appointed. His orders for the night and the following morning had been given ; his letters and despatches had been written or dictated ; audiences had been afforded to several gentlemen on business ; even the minute details of his household had been attended to ; and he had sat down for that repose of the mind which can only be obtained by a complete change of subject. The young Englishman had pleased him from the first ; and without knowing it had flattered his vanity on its most sensitive point—for Richelieu had his weaknesses as well as other men. Where indeed is there any one who can boast that he is without either the hair of the Hebrew

giant or the heel of the Greek demigod? The Cardinal knew too—had indeed very soon perceived—that Edward's mind had been early imbued, in an irregular manner perhaps, but to a deep degree, with that sort of graceful literature of which he himself was most fond, and was full of that refined and delicate taste on which he prided himself. He was the very person, Richelieu thought, for the social converse of hours which were unfilled by any weighty employment—hours which he would not give to his military officers, because his plans were all formed, his resolutions were all taken, and he neither sought advice nor remonstrance—hours which he would not bestow upon his almoner, nor upon his chaplain; for he did not wish to sleep just then—hours that he wished to pass very lightly indeed, as a wise man takes nothing very heavy for his supper before he goes to bed.

“Welcome, Monsieur de Langdale,” said the great Minister, as Edward followed a servant

into the room. "I have not had time to welcome you yet, for in the first place I did not recognize you ; your beard having grown into somewhat leonine proportions. Since then I have not had time ; for I have been engaged with what the people of this world call weighty business, weighty enough, God wot, for those who have to handle it, and which sometimes tires the arm that has to wield it. But let us leave that and talk of other things. How have you fared ? Poor Lord Montagu, your friend, could not keep his nose out of a rat trap, and yet it was badly baited."

"He would not have gone near the wires, if he had taken my advice ;" said Edward. "I ventured to guess not at the designs of your Eminence, but at your probable conduct ; and I warned Lord Montagu not to come too close to you."

"Perhaps I have let you see me too close, young gentleman," said Richelieu, with a good-humoured smile, "and yet it is probable you

served me when you did not intend it. There be some men, my young friend, and they very sensible men too, who will take no advice which comes from younger and less experienced persons; but yet things, as the scripture says—I speak with all reverence—are often revealed to the poor and simple, and are hidden from the wise and great. Now, I have a strong idea that you know more of Cardinal Richelieu, poor Bishop of Luçon, than that great diplomatist Lord Montagu.”

Edward shook his head; “I cannot pretend to do that,” he said, “but my Lord thought he might venture to pass over a quarter of a league of French territory, when some time before you had suffered him to roam for weeks over the whole of France.”

“He had not got the papers then!” said Richelieu, with a short laugh. “I did not want Montagu’s skin; it was his letters and his papers that I arrested; and for that matter, one quarter of a league is as good as a thousand

miles. As for yourself you have told me something new to-day. I heard of you at Aix, where your hot spirit had brought some damage on your skin. You had been wounded, I mean to say—by your own brother, I believe they told me—very foolish, Master Edward Langdale, to fight with one's own brother!”

“I did not fight with him, may it please your Eminence, my sword was never drawn.”

“Ah!” said the Cardinal, “that is well, but then I heard of your making a hole in another man's skin—how was that?”

“Why I told the two men you sent after me, sir,” replied Edward, frankly, “that I would shoot them if they kept dogging me, and I always hold to my word. They not only kept dogging me, but betrayed my Lord into the hands of Monsieur de Bourbonne, and so I shot one of them. I am sorry to say I had not time to shoot the other, or probably your Eminence would not have heard as much of me as you have done.”

"Oh, yes," replied Richelieu, calmly; "the man got well, and was here some two months ago. Besides I never depend upon one informant. But every one may be deceived, and no one told me that the good Count had got you in limbo all this time. You say he denied you means of communicating with me. Did you shew him your safe conduct?"

"I did, sir," answered Edward, "and it had a very good effect, for it made him give me beef and wine, instead of bread and water, with which he began my diet. I demanded also to be sent to your Eminence, but Monsieur de Bourbonne did not see fit to do so."

"Enough," said Richelieu, "enough!" and taking a scrap of paper from the table, he wrote a few words thereon, and laid it down again. "And now tell me all about your escape," he continued, "How did you get away from the giant of the castle?"

Edward narrated with perfect gravity of manner, but with some quiet pleasantry of language,

every particular of his escape from Coiffy, and Richelieu listened evidently amused, but without any comment.

"Then you did not pass through Paris," said the Cardinal, "that is a pity, you would have seen some interesting things there. We are improving the drama greatly, and the Marais has a good troupe they tell me. I am building a house too there, and I should like to have your opinion about it." Edward smiled.

"My opinion would be of little worth," he answered. "I have but little experience in those things of which your Eminence has a thorough knowledge."

"And yet," said Richelieu, "I am told that you have great taste and skill in arts, which reached their height not long ago, but which we have nearly lost in these days—I mean the designing in precious metals. A very extraordinary man told me you were a thorough connoisseur."

"The little knowledge I possess," answered

Edward, "is derived from seeing every day in my early youth some very precious specimens which my father brought over from Italy. They are all gone, alas ! but one, and that I am afraid will soon be lost also."

"Nay," said Richelieu, rather eagerly ; "if you want to part with it I will buy it ; I am making a collection of the works of Cellini and the men of his time."

"Could I obtain it," answered Edward, "I would humbly offer it to your Eminence without price, as a token of my gratitude ! and indeed it is beyond price. But some day soon I fear it will be in less worthy hands, or melted down into gold crowns, and the jewels picked out to adorn the brown neck of some Parisian seamstress—it is within the walls of your devoted town, my Lord. I was foolish not to bring it away with me."

Richelieu paused, and did not speak for a moment or two, but then he asked, "What sort of object is it ?"

"It is a golden cup, or what we in England call a Hanap," answered Edward, "with figures exquisitely sculptured, and the rim surrounded by a garland of jewels in the form of flowers. The figures are in high-relief, and with their hands seem to support the garland."

"It must be beautiful indeed," said Richelieu.

"The only defect," continued Edward, "is that my name is engraved upon the stem."

"What may be its value?" asked the Cardinal? "It is a pity indeed so rare an object should be lost."

"I never heard it valued," replied the young man, "and I will sell it to no one on this earth, though I should have pride to see it in the hands of a benefactor."

"Well, it is a pity," said the Cardinal, "but as there is no help let us change the theme.—Have you seen or heard from Mademoiselle de Mirepoix. I should say, Madame de Langdale, lately?" he spoke with a smile, but Edward had learned that Richelieu's questions, even in his

lightest moments, always meant something, and he replied at once, "Not very lately, my Lord. I have seen her once since we parted in Aunis, as she was passing through Aix on her way to Venice, and she has written to me once since her arrival, by the hands of a gentleman whom you know—Signor Morini."

"He is a very singular man," said Richelieu, in a meditative tone; "do you know, young gentleman, he says, that your fate and mine are connected by an inseparable link, that we were born under the same aspect."

"Your star must have been in the ascendant, sir," said Edward, with a smile, "but yet there must be some truth in it, for who could have thought a year ago, that I should be sitting here conversing with your Eminence as calmly as if you were some ordinary literary man—who could have thought that I should be indebted to you for more than life."

"Act honestly and truly by me, young gentleman, and my friendship shall go further still."

replied Richelieu. "As to these visions of astrologers," he continued, "they are only to be regarded as curious speculations. The star of a man's destiny is in his heart or in his brain. It is that star raises to power, shields against danger, guides amidst intrigue. God's will is above all; but He it is who gives the clear mind and the strong will, the wisdom, and the courage. He renders them successful as far as their success is necessary to His own wise purposes, and then throws a bean stalk in their way and they stumble and fall. We have nought to do but to bow the head and say, Thy will be done!"

He ceased and fell into a fit of thought, and Edward rose and took up his hat as if about to retire, but Richelieu motioned him to his chair again saying; "sit, sit, I have yet an hour. Have you read any of this man Corneille's verses?"

Edward luckily could say he had not; for Richelieu's dislike for Corneille was already strong, and taking up a book from the table

he read some lines commenting severely upon what he called their rudeness. He went on with his criticisms for some ten minutes to an attentive ear, but Edward fancied he perceived an under current of thought running through his literary disquisition.

"Perhaps I may be wrong," said Richelieu, "but in all matters of taste I like the graceful and the polished, better than the strong and rude. This cup which you were speaking of must be a beautiful specimen of art. The design as you have described it shows the conception of a great genius. Is it known who was the artist?"

"I cannot assure your Eminence with certainty," replied Edward, "but he was always said to be a countryman and rival of Benvenuto Cellini. I forget the name, but it is engraved on the inside of the foot."

"John of Bologna," said the Cardinal, "probably John of Bologna."

"The same—the same," said the young Englishman, "I now remember, that is the name."

"It is invaluable!" exclaimed Richelieu warmly, "his works are much more rare than those of Cellini, and some are amongst the most triumphant efforts of genius. There is a Mercury for instance—the heavy bronze seems instinct with god-like life—actually springing from the ground. What a pity that a work of his should be lost! Is there no way of getting it out of Rochelle, think you?"

"But one," answered Edward gravely, "and that I do not suppose either your Eminence or the people of Rochelle would permit."

"What is it?" demanded Richelieu abruptly.

Edward's heart beat high for he had brought him to the very point he desired; but yet a single misplaced word might spoil all, and he struggled against his eagerness with sufficient success to answer with seeming indifference. "I left the cup," he said, "in the hands of the Syndic of the goldsmith's, one Clement Tournon, who had taken me to his house and nursed me most kindly."

"He is a pestilent heretic," said the Cardinal sharply.

"And so am I, my lord," answered Edward; "but he is an honest and good man. I am willing if your Eminence desires it to try and get back into La Rochelle and bring you the cup; but I could only do so on being permitted to offer poor old Monsieur Tournon a pass to quit the city and escape the famine which they say is raging there."

Richelieu sat silent for a minute or two, and Edward then added, "I am not sure I shall be able to accomplish what I desire; but I will do my best and shall be well pleased to see such a treasure of art in the hands of one who can appreciate it as your Eminence can."

"I could not accept it," said Richelieu, "except on making compensation."

"Nothing like sale, my lord," replied Edward, "the price has been paid before hand, and it must be an offering of gratitude or not at all, but I much fear that the Rochellois will not

admit me within their walls. I can but make the attempt, however."

"But this Clement Tournon," said Richelieu thoughtfully; "you know not what you ask young man. Every mouth within that city hastens its fall, and I have been obliged already to show myself obdurate to all entreaties—to see women and children, and old men driven back into their rebellious nest. They say too your great Duke of Buckingham is preparing another fleet for their relief. He will find himself mistaken, but still we must waste no time."

"Old Clement Tournon is no great eater," said Edward bluntly, "his feeble jaws will not hasten the fall of the city five minutes; and it is possible that if admitted to your Eminence's presence he might be the means of persuading his fellow citizens to submission, if he sees that defence is hopeless, and that favourable terms may be obtained."

"Ha! say you so," exclaimed Richelieu; and leaning his head upon his hand he fell into

profound thought. Edward would not say a word more, and after some five or ten minutes the Cardinal looked up and shook his head. "The Rochellois will receive no messengers, reject all offers; even the King's proclamation, sent by a herald they would not admit within the walls, and Montjoie had to leave it before the gates."

"Perhaps they have learned better by this time," said Edward, "and if not they can but drive me back with bullets and cannon balls."

"Well," said Richelieu with a clearer brow, "you give me a better reason now for suffering you to go. So help me Heaven, as I would spare these poor infatuated people the horrors they now suffer, if they would let me. But rebellion must not exist in this land, and shall not while I live. They must submit, but they shall have terms that even you will call fair. So you may tell them if you can but find your way in."

Edward saw that the message was vague and not at all likely to have any effect upon the

people of Rochelle ; but he did not try to bring the Cardinal to any thing more definite, for he had no inclination to take part in a negotiation for the surrender of Rochelle, remembering that all the plans of his own government might be frustrated by such a result.

He and the Cardinal both kept silent for several minutes, Richelieu's eyes remaining fixed upon the table, and his face continuing perfectly motionless, though he was evidently in deep thought. At length he said abruptly. "You will come back yourself?"

"Upon my honour, sir ;" replied Edward—"if I live, and they will let me. They shall either keep me as a prisoner or I will be here in four and twenty hours."

"So be it then," said the Cardinal, "you shall not only have a pass but some one shall be sent with you to the very outermost post ; for there seems to be something uncommonly suspicious in your appearance. Twice, in your case, already men have set at nought my hand

and seal. The second case shall be punished. The third for your sake and my own must be guarded against. As to your entrance into Rochelle, there may be—probably will be—some difficulty; but if you are skilful, and I think you are, you may succeed. I need not recommend to you caution in what you say and do. We have some disease in the camp it is true; but they have pestilence in the City. Our supplies are not over abundant, but they are suffering from the direst famine. Every day increases our supplies and diminishes theirs.”

“I shall say as little as possible, your Eminence,” answered Edward; “first, because I cannot—knowing what I know—advise them to hold out. Secondly, because if I advise them to surrender, I might be wrong. Clement Tournon, when he has seen your Eminence, after having witnessed what is passing in the City can advise better and will be more readily believed. It is well that you should have some means of communication with the Rochellois

I know none of their chief men, even by name, and they would put no faith in me."

"In a week from this time," said Richelieu, "they must surrender. The dyke will be finished which shuts them out from all the world. Vain will be English fleets. Vain all their imaginary armies. The gaunt spectre which already strides through their streets will have knocked at every door. Where will be the hand to fire the cannon? Where the arm to defend the gate? The dead and the dying will be the garrison; and the soldiers of the King will rush in to wrest the undefended plunder from a host of skeletons. I would fain avoid such a result—if young man," he added with a shudder, "I delight not in misery and suffering, I have no pleasure in tears and woe. But France must have peace; the King must have loyal subjects, and were my brother amongst those rebels they should be forced to obey. You are frank and I believe you honest, I therefore expect that you bear them no mes-

sage from the enemies of France, that you delude them with no vain hopes, that you return yourself as speedily as possible, and that you bring this old man with you, if he will come. Remember that I am not to be trifled with, and that I bear open enmity more patiently than deceit."

"I have no fear, sir," answered Edward. "I have come back and placed myself in your power without the least hesitation, and I will do so again; but then I will beseech your Eminence to let me pass over into England. I am nearly without money, and although I have sufficient on the other side of the Channel, I cannot get it without going for it."

"We wilk talk of that hereafter," answered Richelieu. "I think I will let you go; but at all events you shall not want for money. What is money, Monsieur de Langdale?⁴ It is but dross—at least so the poets tell us; and yet I have found few men who like it better."

"Without it men," replied Edward, "cannot eat or drink or even sleep, and it would be hard

for want of money to want meat and drink and sleep when I have plenty for all my wants on the other side of that arm of the sea—but harder still, my Lord Cardinal, to take money, from any man, that does not belong to me.”

“How proud these islanders are!” said Richelieu with a smile; “why there is hardly a Frenchman in the land that would not thank me for a crown.”

“If I had worked for it,” answered Edward, “I might thank you two; but till there be peace between France and England I can do your Eminence no service.”

“Now let any one say,” exclaimed Richelieu with a laugh, “that I am not the sweetest tempered man in all this realm of France—ay, as sweet and gentle as Mazarin himself. Why no man will believe that you say to me such things and I do not send you to the Bastille at once. Oh, tell it not in the camp, or you will lose credit for ever.”

“I do not intend to tell it any where, my

Lord,' replied Edward. "I know it would be foolish and perhaps it might be dangerous. I am not ungrateful for your condescension to me, but it is a sort of thing I should not like to sport with."

"Right," said Richelieu, "you are right. You know the fact in Natural History, that tigers may be tamed; but if any one suffers them, in playing with them, to draw blood, he seldom goes away as full of life as he came. I see you understand me; now go away and sleep. Be here by day break to morrow and you shall find the passes ready, and some body prepared to ride with you to the outposts; he will wait there four and twenty hours for your return. But if I should find you in Rochelle when it is taken—except in a dungeon—beware of the Tiger."

Edward bowed and withdrew, but he retired not to rest. His first object was to enquire for Beaupré and Pierrot; they were not in the castle, and he had to seek them in the village

below, where, after passing through many of the wild scenes of camp life, he found them, at length, in a small wooden shed where some sort of food, such as it was, could be procured by those who had money to pay for it. Much to the surprise of good Pierrot la Grange, the young gentleman's first order, after directing his horse to be prepared half an hour before daylight, was to have his flask filled with the best brandy he could procure and brought up to his room that night."

"Has the Cardinal given you leave to go into the City?" asked Jacques Beaupré in astonishment.

"He has given me leave to try;" replied Edward.

"Pray then, let me go with you!" said the good man.

"Impossible," was the answer, "I must go alone, and take my fate alone whatever it may be. See that the brandy be good, Pierrot, if you can find it. But be quick, for I would fain sleep

before I go," and returning to his room in the Castle he waited till the man brought a small flat bottle well filled, and then casting himself down upon the bed, fell sound asleep exhausted, less by fatigue, than by emotions, which he had felt deeply though he had concealed them well.

CHAPTER VIII.

Two hours had not passed after the sun's rising above the horizon when Edward Langdale stood with a small group of officers at the extreme outpost of the royal army before what was called the Niort gate of the City of Rochelle. There was still a space of about five hundred yards between him and the walls, and before him rose all those towers and pinnacles, many of which have since been destroyed, but which rendered them and still renders Rochelle

one of the most picturesque cities of France when seen from a distance. During the whole siege the operations, though severe and terrible, had been slow and apparently tardy. The Rochellois had been glad to husband their powder, and it was no part of Richelieu's plan to breach the walls or to do more than to harass the citizens by an occasional attack. On this morning there had been no firing on either side, and the town looked as quiet and peaceable as if there were no hostile force before it. But as Edward Langdale and his companion—a young officer of the Cardinal's guard—had ridden down from Mauzé, the latter had pointed out to the young Englishman that famous dyke, which, stretching across the mouth of the port, had gradually cut off the City from all communication with friends at home or allies abroad. He had in a jesting way too put some questions to Edward in regard to the objects of his journey, but he obtained no information and did not dare to press them closely

“You had better take some more breakfast, sir,” said an old officer commanding at the advanced posts. “You will get none in there; and though we are forbidden to suffer the slightest morsel to go in, I presume that does not apply to what a man can carry in his stomach.”

“I shall soon be back again, if they let me in at all,” answered Edward. “Can any one lend me a white flag? for I may as well not draw the fire. That is a sort of breakfast I have no inclination for.”

A small white flag was soon procured, and leaving his horse with Pierrot and Beaupré, who had followed him down the hill, Edward set out on foot. He carried the white flag in his hand, and approached with a calm steady pace towards the gate. He saw some men walk quickly along the wall, towards the same point to which his own course was directed, but the flag of truce was respected and he was permitted to approach within five or six yards of the

heavy gate. Then, however, a voice shouted from behind a small grated wicket, "stand back! What seek you here?"

"I seek to speak with the Syndic, Clement Tournon," said Edward, "and if not with him, with Monsieur Guiton, Mayor of the City."

"Stand back! you cannot enter here," said the man on the other side.

"Will you cause the Mayor to be informed," said Edward, "that Master Edward Langdale, an English gentleman, well known in Rochelle, stands without and desires admittance, if it be but for an hour."

The man grumbled something which Edward did not hear, and there seemed to be a consultation held within, at the end of which the same voice told him to keep on the other side of the drawbridge while they informed the Mayor. The young gentleman accordingly retired, and seated himself on a large stone at the end of the bridge, where for nearly an hour he had nothing to occupy him but

his own thoughts, and every now and then a puff of smoke from one of the royalists' batteries which had lately begun firing, and one gun replying from the walls. It seemed all child's play, however, and he ceased to think of the matter at all. His mind then turned to his own position, and the curious fact of Richelieu having suffered him to visit Rochelle with so little opposition. He could not but ask himself how much the gold cup had to do with the minister's acquiescence ; but as he reflected more deeply upon the Cardinal's character, and upon various facts which had come to his knowledge, he concluded, in his own mind, that Richelieu might be well pleased to make another effort to open a communication with the citizens, without compromising his own dignity. The position of the besieging force he thought might not be so good as it appeared. The dyke on which so much depended, and which he had had no means of examining near, might not be sufficiently solid to resist the

action of the sea and winds. The English armament might be, to Richelieu's knowledge, of a more formidable character and advanced state of preparation than was admitted ; and all these circumstances might render the speedy capture of Rochelle upon any terms absolutely necessary.

In little more than an hour the same voice he had heard before called him up to the gate, and the wicket was partly opened to give him admittance under the archway, and he found five or six men, with halberds on their shoulders and otherwise well armed, with a young man bearing the appearance of an officer, advanced to meet him. The steel caps of the soldiers, in some degree, concealed their faces, but the broad brimmed plumed hat of the young officer served in no degree to hide the gaunt pallid features, the high cheek bones, the fallen in cheeks, the hollow eyes and strong marking of the temples, which told a sad tale of the ravages of famine even amongst the higher and more wealthy classes of the town. A feeling

of delicacy made Edward withdraw his eyes after one hasty glance at the young gentleman's countenance, and as the other paused without speaking, for a moment, he said "May I ask, sir, if any one has conveyed my message to the Syndic, Clement Tournon, or to the Mayor."

"Monsieur Tournon is ill in his own house," replied the young officer, "but Monsieur Guiton, the Mayor, has come down to a house near this gate and will receive you there, as it might be inconvenient to invite you to the town-house for fear of any disturbance."

"I am ready to wait upon him," replied Edward, "wherever he pleases."

"I am sorry to say," observed the young officer, "that even for so short a distance you must give up your arms and suffer your eyes to be bandaged."

"I have no arms," replied Edward, "as you may see. I purposely came without. As to bandaging my eyes, do as you please. I am no spy, nor agent of the French government."

He pulled off his hat as he spoke, bending down his head for the handkerchief to be tied over his eyes, and as soon as that somewhat disagreeable operation was performed, the young officer took him by the hand, and with one of the soldiers following led him out into Rochelle. When they had passed on perhaps a hundred yards, Edward received a painful intimation of the state of the City. As they seemed to turn into another street the young officer caught him by the arm and pulled him sharply aside, saying to the soldier, "Have that body removed. These sights serve to scare the people and make them clamorous."

"I do not think she is dead yet," said the soldier.

"Then have her carried to the hospital as quickly as possible. Don't let her lie there and die."

He then led Edward on, and in two or three minutes more stopped at the door of a house and entered what seemed a small passage, where he removed the handkerchief from Edward's eyes.

“Monsieur Guiton is here,” he said opening a door, where in a little room, and at a small table, was seated a man of middle age with a dagger by his side and a sword lying on the table. His form seemed once to have been exceedingly powerful and his face firm and resolute; but there was that gaunt and worn expression in every line which Edward had seen in the countenance of his guide.

“Who are you, sir?” said the Mayor, “and what is the motive of so rare a thing as the visit of a stranger to the town of Rochelle?”

“My name is Edward Langdale,” replied the young Englishman, “a poor follower of my Lord Montagu, who once bore letters from his grace of Buckingham to the city of Rochelle.”

“Ay, I remember,” said the Mayor thoughtfully; “you were roughly used if I remember right— but now, sir, to your business.”

“It is in a great degree personal,” replied Edward, “but as it is private I would rather speak to you alone.”

"Leave us," said the Mayor addressing the young officer, who at once quitted the room and closed the door. "Now, sir," continued Guition, "I am ready to hear. But be brief, I pray you. Occupation here is more plenty than time, and time more plenty than provisions. Therefore I cannot offer you refreshment nor show you much courtesy."

"I require neither, sir," answered Edward. "My business refers to Monsieur Clement Tournon. He is aged—infirm; and I have with some difficulty obtained from the Cardinal de Richelieu permission and a pass for him to quit Rochelle."

"Ha !" said the Mayor, "Ha ! this is strange, young gentleman ! You must be in mighty favour. Why, sir, he has driven back women and children, and old men—all starving—from the French lines into this City of famine—you, an Englishman—an enemy. He shew such favour to you ! Pah ! There must be something under this. Have you no message for me ?"

"No distinct message, sir," replied Edward ; "the Cardinal indeed said, in terms so vague that I cannot and will not counsel any reliance upon them, that if Rochelle would submit, she should have favourable terms—as favourable as even I could expect. But I am not his messenger, sir, neither is there any thing that I know under the plain fact which I have stated."

"Let me see your pass ;" said Guiton abruptly. Edward handed it to him and he examined it minutely. "Edward Langdale and one companion: to wit the Syndic, Clement Tournon !" he said, "Well—this is marvellous strange ! I cannot let this pass without some further knowledge of so unaccountable a matter."

"Well, Monsieur Guiton," answered Edward firmly ; "pray remember, that I, comparatively a stranger to him, have perilled much to aid and rescue a man who once shewed me kindness, nursed me like a father when I was sick, and trusted me as he would his son when I had recovered ; and that it is you—his ancient

friend—as I am told—who keep him here to die of famine or of sickness when he can be of no further service either with hands or head. I have done my duty. Probably you think you are doing yours.”

The Mayor waved his hand. “Not so many words,” he said, “can you give me any explanation of this strange matter.”

“None,” replied Edward boldly.

“Does Clement Tournon wish to leave the City?” demanded the Mayor again.

“I do not know,” replied the young Englishman. “He is old, infirm, and I am told sick. I have had no communication with him. But he knows he can be of no further service in Rochelle, or I believe he would remain in it till the last man died and the last tower fell.”

“He is sick,” said the Mayor “of a very common disease here—but yet we are not so badly off that we cannot maintain the City till the English fleet arrives.”

“The dyke ;” said Edward emphatically.

"Oh!" replied Guiton with a scoffing and unnatural sounding laugh, "the first storm, such as I have seen many of, will sweep that dyke away."

"But if it stands fourteen days," said Edward, "will you not have a storm within these walls which will sweep away the people of Rochelle?"

Guiton covered his eyes with his hands and remained silent. "But I have nothing to do with these things, sir," said Edward. "It was only to give aid—to give safety to a friend, an old noble minded man who befriended me when I had need of friendship, that I came into Rochelle at all. May I ask what is this sickness you speak of so lightly?"

"Famine, sir, famine!" said Guiton sharply, "an ounce of meat—God knows of what kind—two ounces of dried peas, and a draught of cold water is but meagre diet for old men and babes. We strong men can bear it; but there be some who are foolish enough to die, rather than endure it a little longer."

“And have you the heart, sir,” asked Edward, with some indignation in his tone, “to refuse the means of escape offered to an old man, and that man Clement Tournon, and to speak lightly of his sufferings—his martyrdom, I might say?”

“Oh, no, no!” cried the Mayor vehemently, stretching forth his hands. “Young man, you mistake me! Could my blood nourish him, he should have the last drop. What! old Clement Tournon, my dear, dear friend, would I deprive him of one hour’s life? but it is that I cannot comprehend, how you are here—why you are here. This story that you tell is mere nonsense.”

“It is true, nevertheless,” said Edward, “but if my word will not satisfy you—as indeed I see no reason why it should—come with me to Clement Tournon, and he perhaps can tell you how much I can dare to serve a friend.”

“I will,” cried Gu'ton starting up; but then he sat down again immediately saying, “no, no! I cannot bear those faces in the streets.

Can you find your way yourself? for I can spare no men."

"Not if I am to be blindfolded," said Edward, "otherwise I could find it I am sure."

"Pshaw!" said the Mayor, "what use of blindfolding you? you will see dying and dead, plague eaten, famine stricken, but you can go and tell the Cardinal de Richelieu, how the citizens of Rochelle can die, rather than see their privileges torn from them, their religion trodden under foot. You can tell him too that I will defend those walls as long as there is one soldier left to man them, and one hand capable of firing a gun, unless we have security for our faith—you are sure, he said nothing more."

"No, nothing more," answered Edward. "Merely that he would give you the most favourable terms; but that he would not have rebellion in the land."

"Rebellion!" muttered Guiton scornfully, "who first drew the sword? But let us think of Clement Tournon. I am willing to believe

you, young gentleman. If I remember right I have heard the old man speak well of you—and after all, what harm can you do? You can but repeat a story of our sufferings which I am aware they already know too well in yonder camp. What they do not know, is the courage with which we can bear them. Go to the Syndic. He has not come forth for several days—go to him and see if the prospect of relief can give fresh strength to those enfeebled limbs, fresh energy to that crushed and scarcely beating heart. Tell him that I not only permit but beseech him to go with you—that even one mouth less in Rochelle is a relief. He has done his duty manfully, to the last. He can do it no longer. Beseech him to go —And yet,” he continued in a sad tone; “I much doubt his strength. Could he have crawled even to the council chamber we should have seen his face. Could he have lifted his voice we should have heard his inspiring words. He was alive last night, I know. But to-day.

Alas, alas, my poor friend!" and some tears ran down the worn cheek of the gallant defender of Rochelle.

"I have some brandy under my coat," whispered Edward. "I brought it on purpose for him. It may give him strength at least to reach the outposts."

Guiton seized his hand and wrung it hard. "Noble young man. Well bethought," he said; "but he must have a little food. Stay, he shall have my dinner. I do not want it. By Heaven, the thought that we have saved old Clement Tournon will be better than the best of meals to me."

He rose from the table and approaching the door gave some orders to those without, and then returned saying "there is still much to be thought of, young gentleman, and we have little time to think. I fear if you go out in the day time, the people will pour forth after you; and you and they will be driven back by cannon shots."

"It must now be near one o'clock," said Edward, "and it will probably take some time to restore his strength a little. If you, sir, nobly give him up your own food, it must be administered to him by slow degrees. And—"

"What an ounce of meat!" said Guiton with a miserable smile. "My fare is the same as the rest, sir. But I must leave all that to you. His own ration will be served to him in an hour. Mine, you shall take and give him as it seems best to you. I will write a pass for you and him that you may not be stopped at any hour of the night or day, and then I must go back to the town hall, lest men should wonder at my long absence. My only fear is that the good old man will not take my ration, if he knows it comes from me."

"Take a little of these strong waters, sir," said Edward, drawing the flask from beneath his coat. Guiton hesitated; and Edward added, "There is much more than he can or ought to use, and if I tell him that I brought

you some supply, he will take the food you send more readily."

The Mayor took the flask and drank a very little, giving it back again saying, "Mix it with water ere you give him any. By Heaven it is like fire! Yet it will keep me up I do believe. Hark! There are steps. Put it up quickly. They might murder you for it if any of the common people were to see it."

The steps were those of a soldier bringing the scanty meal which was all the Mayor allowed himself. A pen and ink and a scrap of paper were then procured, and the pass for Edward and Clement Tournon was soon written. To make all sure Guiton called the young officer, in whom he seemed to have much confidence, and asked if he would be on guard at the gates that night. The young man answered in the affirmative, and the Mayor gave strict directions that Monsieur Edward Langdale and the Syndic Tournon should be passed safely and unmolested on their way towards the royal

camp. A smile of hope and pleasure came upon the officer's face, and Guiton added, "Do not deceive yourself, Bernard. This is no treaty for surrender. We must suffer a little longer and then we shall have relief. Here, go with Monsieur de Langdale, first to the gate by which he entered, then to the end of the rue de l'horloge. There leave him. Farewell, sir," he continued turning to Edward and then adding in a lower tone, "mark well the turnings from the gate, and walk somewhat slow and feebly so as not to draw attention. The people are in an irritable state."

CHAPTER IX.

I WILL not dwell upon the horrors of the streets of Rochelle. They have been described by an able pen—at least I believe so ; for I have not seen the work of Madame de Genlis since my boyhood, and that, dear reader, is a long time ago—quite long enough to forget more than that.

The part of the town in which stood the house of Clement Tournon seemed quite de-

served, and the house itself showed no signs of being inhabited. The windows were all closed ; and the little court before the building which separated it from the general line of the street, and which was once so trimly kept, was now all overgrown with grass. It was knee high and even the path of smooth white stones which led to the principal door hardly shewed a trace of the unfrequent footfall. With a sinking heart Edward looked up, but all was still and silent. The door stood open and he approached and knocked with his knuckles. There was no reply however—no voices were heard from the once merry kitchen : no sound of hammer or file from the workshop.

Edward Langdale had learned to know the house well ; and entering, he mounted the stairs and went into the room on the right. It was vacant and dark also, for the windows were all closed. He then turned to another, but it was empty also. He saw some light however stream from the room at the back—the little room

where he had lain in sickness for so many days—Lucette's room, where he had first seen that dear face. It was a place full of memories for him, and even if he had not seen that ray of sunshine crossing the top of the stairs he would have entered. Pushing open the door which stood a little ajar, he went in and there was the object of his search straight before him.

Seated in the great arm chair in which he himself had sat when first recovering was good old Clement Tournon, the shadow of his former self. The palms of his hands rested on his knees; his head was bent forward on his chest; his eyes were shut; and his lips and cheek were of a bluish white. Had it not been for a slight rocking motion of his body as he sat Edward would have thought him dead; behind his chair silent and still as a statue stood the good woman Marthon. She too was as pale as her helmet shaped white cap; and the frank good humoured

expression of her countenance was supplanted by a cold, hard, stony look, which seemed to say that every energy was dead. That such was not really the case, however, Edward soon saw, for, the moment her eyes lighted on him as he passed the door, the old bright light came into them again, and she walked quietly but hastily across the floor, in her little blue socks, holding up her fingers as a sign to keep silence.

"He sleeps," she said, "he sleeps, it is well nigh as good as food for him. But how came you here, Master Ned? what has brought you? has the English fleet arrived?"

"Alas, no," replied Edward in the same low tone which she herself had used, "and it could not enter the port if it had. But I come if possible to save that good old man. I have a little food, here, with me. Go, get me a cup and some water, for I have a bottle of that which will be better to him at first even than food."

"God bless you, sir," said the good woman, "there is not a drop of wine in all the city, and with him the tide of life is nearly gone out. I thought he would have died this morning, but he would rise. You stay with him and I will be back in a minute, but keep silent and still, for sleep always does him good." So saying she hurried away and brought a silver cup and some fresh water.

All was silent during her absence, the old man slept on, and Edward Langdale seated himself near as quietly as possible. Marthon took her place again without saying a word, and for about three quarters of an hour the slumber of Clement Tournon continued unbroken. Then a voice was heard at the foot of the stairs crying "Rations," and Marthon hurried down.

Either the voice or the movement in the room disturbed the old man. He moved in his chair, raised his head a little, and Edward with some of the strong water well diluted

in the cup approached and put it to his lips.

"What is it?" said Clement Tournon, putting the cup feebly aside with his hand. "I thought it might have pleased God I should die in that sleep."

"Take a little," said Edward in a low tone, "it will refresh you," and Clement Tournon suffered him to raise the cup again to his lips, aiding with his own feeble hands, and drank a deep draught as if he were very thirsty. Then suddenly raising his eyes to Edward's face, he exclaimed, "Good heavens, who are you? Edward Langdale! is it all a dream—a horrible dream?"

"I have come to see you and take you away, Monsieur Tournon," said Edward as calmly as he could. "Keep yourself quite tranquil and I will tell you more presently. At present be as silent as I used to be when I was sick and you were well."

The old Syndic sat without speaking for a

moment or two, and then said, "I know not what you have given me but it seems to have strengthened and revived me. But pray tell me more. I cannot make this out at all."

"I will tell you after you have eaten something," said Edward. "I have brought something with me for you, but first sip a little more of this draught."

The old man drank again and then ate a little of the food which had been brought him, but the forces of life had so much diminished that it was long before the weight of the body seemed to give the mind liberty to act. At first he would wander a little, less with what seemed delirium than forgetfulness. The brains seemed to sleep or faint; but with judicious care—an instinctive knowledge as it were of what was best for him—Edward administered support and stimulus by slow degrees till the mind fully awakened up. Quietly and cautiously the young man told him what he had done, why he came, and the

certain prospect there was of his escape from that city of horror and famine if he could but summon strength to pass the gates."

"But Guiton—but my friend Guiton," said Clement Tournon, "what will he think of me."

"He begs you; he beseeches you to go;" said Edward. "He says you have done all you can for Rochelle—that you can do no more, that every mouth out of the City is a relief, and that now you can go in safety you ought to go."

"Oh my son," said Clement Tournon, "you know not what it is to ask me to quit the home of many years. I have travelled it is true, I have left my domestic hearth, I have left the earth that holds my wife and children; but it was always with a thought of coming back and dying here. Now if I go, I go for ever, never to see Rochelle more."

"Nay, I hope that is not so," answered Edward, "the Cardinal assured me that he

would give the most favourable terms to the city, and I cannot but think that your presence may be the means of rendering those terms really, and not nominally favourable. You can tell him of the determination of the people—of your certain expectation of succour.”

The old man shook his head—“No succour,” he said, “no succour.”

“But at all events it is probable,” replied Edward, “that you may be able to obtain terms for Rochelle which she can accept honourably; you can aid no one here, you can do good service there. In this instance, the path of duty and safety is one.”

“Oh I will go,” said Clement Tournon languidly, “I need no persuading—but what am I to do with this poor creature?” he continued, looking to Marthon who remained still in the room, “how can I leave her behind me?”

A sort of spasm passed over the woman's countenance, but she answered with the real devotion of woman; “Go old master, go.

Never mind me. I can do well enough. My light heart keeps me up, and old women live upon little. When the young gentleman has risked every thing to save you, you cannot disappoint him."

"No indeed, Marthon;" said the Syndic; but yet"—

"Never talk about yet," said Marthon, "you have got to go, that is clear, and perhaps you may be able to make a treaty by which we shall all be fed and comforted. Master Guiton should have done it long ago; but he is a hard man and would see us all die of famine, and himself too, before he would abate an inch of his pride."

"Hush, hush!" said Edward, "he is a good and noble man, Marthon, and times far distant shall talk of the famous defence of Rochelle by the Mayor Guiton. Bring your Master a little more food, Marthon. The sun is beginning to go down and we shall soon be able to set out."

The poor old Syndic bent his eyes down and wept—tears of age, of weakness, and of manifold emotions, and Edward thinking it better to distract his thoughts spoke of the gold cup which he had promised to bring Richelieu, and asked where he could find it.

“What a bribe!” exclaimed Clement Tournon, with more energy than the young man thought he had possessed. “The great Cardinal de Richelieu take a bribe.”

“No, no!” replied Edward, “do not misunderstand me. This cup was mentioned, but incidentally, as a curious and beautiful object of art, and I promised to bring it to him, therefore I must keep my word. But if I must tell the truth, I believe the Cardinal’s inducement to give me a pass for you was that, through you, he might open some communication with the citizens who have refused all overtures.”

“Ay, there is that Mayor Guiton again,” said Marthon.

"The Cardinal assured me," continued Edward, "that he had no wish to crush Rochelle, and would grant such favourable terms as could not honestly be rejected."

"God grant it," said Clement Tournon, "but he has us at his mercy and he knows it. As to the cup, my son, you will find it in the armory where it stood when you were here before—where are the keys, Marthon? You will find it all safe and the papers with it—a letter for you amongst the rest, but I knew not where you were. All the gold and silver is safe, for when the people broke into the house it was food they sought, poor fools. They cared not for gold and silver, they could not eat that."

Marthon found the keys and handed them to Edward by Clement Tournon's orders, and the cup, wrapped in manifold papers, and enveloped in an old parchment bag, was soon found. The whole packet was inscribed in the goldsmith's own hand-writing, with the

words, "The cup within belongs to Master Edward Langdale, of Buckley, in the county of Huntingdon, England ; left with me for safe keeping." By the side of the cup lay a letter surrounded, as was common in those days, with a silken string, tied and sealed, and on taking it up Edward instantly recognised the handwriting of good Doctor Winthorne. That was no time for reading, however, and he put the letter in his breast, but his eye could not help glancing over the vast quantities of both gold and silver which even that one cupboard contained. Taking the cup in his hands he locked the door, and returning to the room of the Syndic enquired, with some anxiety, "what was to be done for the protection of his property while he was gone."

"Dross, Dross! my son," said Clement Tournon, "yet the door of the room may as well be locked and bolted. Give Marthon the key."

"We will take care of it, Master Ned," said

Marthon, "the boys come back every night—all who are left of those poor fellows; but stout John died of the fever, and William the flagree man soon gave way when we came to want food. Old men and women have borne it best. But nobody will think of touching the gold and silver. What could they do with it if they had it? All the gold in that room would not buy a pound of beef in Rochelle."

"It were as well to make all safe, however," answered Edward, "I will go and lock all the doors."

"I will come with you," said Clement Tournon, "and see whether I can walk. What you have given me seems to have revived me much—very much. What is it?"

"What you probably never tasted in your life before," said Edward; "strong waters; and it shows the benefit of reserving the use of them for cases of need. That which kills many a man who uses it freely, is now giving

you back life because you have never used it at all. All I have in that flask would have not the slightest effect upon Pierrot la Grange. I trust there is enough there to afford you strength to reach the camp."

"Oh more than enough, more than enough," said the good old Syndic, whose holy horror of drunkenness made him almost shudder at the idea of what he had been imbibing, although he could not but feel that it had wrought a great and beneficial change upon him. "Now let me see how I can walk."

Edward gave him his arm ; but the old man showed much more strength than he expected, tottered a little in his gait, it is true, and lost his breath before he reached his arm-chair again. But Edward and Marthon applied themselves diligently during the next two hours to confirm the progress he had already made, and were not unsuccessful.

I cannot say whether the good woman, whose love and devotion towards her Master

were extreme, did or did not secretly bestow upon him her own scanty portion of the common food which was doled out to all those who had given up their own stores to be disposed of by the city ; but certain it is that, till the sun had nearly set, she and Edward contrived every quarter of an hour to furnish the old man with a small piece of meat, a mouthful of pea bread, and a few spoonfuls of the brandy and water.

At length the hour for departure came ; and the parting between the old Syndic and the faithful Marthon was a painful one. They said nothing it is true ; but she kissed his hand, and her tears, whether she would or not, fell upon it. Clement Tournon wept too ; but Edward drew him slowly away, and once more he went out into the streets of Rochelle.

Those streets were nearly vacant, for almost every body, not wanted on the walls, had retired to their miserable dwellings, there, in solitude and famine, to wait the return of

the daylight which brought no comfort and very little hope.

Two men indeed passed by at a slow pace and turned to look. "There goes old Clement Tournon," said one, "up to the town house I suppose as usual"

"I thought he was dead," said the other. "Old Docter Cavillac died last night."

They spoke aloud, for those were no times of delicacy, and Edward fearful that the old Syndic had heard such depressing words, whispered. "I trust, Monsieur Tournon, you will be able to obtain such terms as the city can accept."

"Pray God I may!" said the old man not perceiving Edward's little stroke of art in playing off hope against despair. "Oh, it would be the brightest day of my life."

They walked slowly, verly slowly; but at length they reached the gate under the heavy stone arch, over which a very feeble oil lamp was burning, for by this time no one article of

common necessity was not terribly scarce in Rochelle. The common soldiers on guard were evidently indisposed to let Edward and his companion pass, but the young officer whom the Mayor had called Bernard was soon summoned forth from the guard house, and with a reverent pressure of the hand welcomed the old Syndic. "God bless you, sir," he said, "I was right glad to hear what Monsieur Guiton told me. Would to heaven I had a horse or a mule to give you to help you across; but it is not half a mile, and I trust you have strength for that."

"God knows, Bernard," said the old man who was bearing heavily upon Edward's arm. "I trust my going may be for the good of the city. Were it not for that hope, I should be well contented to stay and die here. God knows, how often during the last week I have wished that it was all over and these eyes closed."

"Nay, nay, sir," said the other in a kindly tone. "You are reserved for better things

I trust. But the wicket is open. You had better pass through lest any people should come."

The Syndic and his young companion passed out into the darkness; but Clement Tournon's steps became so feeble as they crossed the drawbridge that Edward proposed to sit down and rest awhile upon the same stone where he had sat in the morning; and then to amuse his mind, for the time, he spoke of his last visit to the city, and even under shadow of the night alluded to Lucette.

"Ah, dear child!" said the old man, "I heard that she had reached safely the care of the Duke de Rohan, for he wrote to me. But such a letter; I could not comprehend it at all. It was full of heat and anger about something—I know not what: for there has been no means of enquiring since. He surely would not have had me keep her in Rochelle to suffer as we have suffered; but yet he seemed displeased that I had sent her away."

"He knew not all the circumstances," answered Edward, "and these great men are impetuous. Have you heard from her?"

"Not a word;" said the old man with a sigh, "and yet God knows I loved her as a father."

"And she loved you;" said Edward, "but it was some months ere she could possibly write; and since then Rochelle has been strictly blockaded."

"Ah, Edward Langdale," said the old man in a sad tone, "the young soon forget. Joys and pleasures, and the freshness of all things around them wipe away the memories of all early affections; and it is well it should be so. Old people forget too, but the sponge which blots out their remembrance is filled with bitterness and gall and decay."

Edward felt that Clement Tournon was doing injustice to Lucette; but yet the words were painful to him to hear, and he changed the subject, trying to converse upon indifferent

things but with his mind still recurring to the question, "Can Lucette forget so easily?"

At the end of some half hour he said, "Let us try now, sir, to reach the outposts. But first take some more of this cordial. Remember what we have at stake."

The old man rose; but he was still very feeble, and he stumbled amongst the low bushes at the end of the bridge. Immediately there was a call from the walls above of "Who goes there?" and the next instant a shot from a musket passed close by. Another succeeded but went more wide, and hurrying forward Clement Tournon, Edward put as much space between them and the walls as possible, saying in a light tone, "Hard to be shot at by our friends! I trust that it is an omen we shall be well received by our enemies."

"I cannot go so fast," said the old man. "Go you on, Master Ned, I will follow. If they shoot me I cannot hurry."

"No, no! We go together," replied Edward, "here keep along this path, straight for that watch fire;" and placing the old Syndic before him, he sheltered him completely from the walls. But there was no more firing; and the only result was to scare the unhappy Rochellois with a report that a party of the enemy had approached close to the gates to reconnoitre.

The distance was really very short, as we have seen, from the walls to the Royal lines; but it was long to poor Clement Tournon, and it required all Edward's care and skill and attention to get the old man across; but at length the challenge of the sentinel came, and it was the most welcome sound that at that moment could meet Edward Langdale's ear. His flask was at the last drop, and the good Syndic seemed to have no strength left. All difficulties, however, were now over. In five minutes the young officer who had accompanied Edward from Mauzé was by their side

with Jacques Beaupré and Pierrot, and by the demonstrative joy of the two latter when they beheld Clement Tournon, one would have thought it was their father who had been rescued from death."

"Ah sir!" exclaimed Jacques Beaupré addressing Edward, "I will never doubt that you can do any thing again. No body but you, in the whole world, could have done it."

"I must beg of you, sir," said Edward to the young officer, "to obtain some place of repose for my poor old friend here. He is incapable of going any further to night; and I must away to the Cardinal. These two men can, I presume, procure wine and meat for him; for food and rest are all that is needful."

"Be assured, sir, all shall be attended to properly," said the young officer in the most courteous tone. "Monsieur de Bassompierre will be here himself in a moment, for he says he knows and esteems this gentlemen, and we could not leave him in better hands, as I my-

self must accompany you back to his Eminence who has moved to down to what they call the petit chateau, some miles nearer the city."

This brief conversation took place some fifty yards from where Clement Tournon was seated between Pierrot and Jacques Beaupré, and at the moment Edward uttered the last words he heard a bluff good humoured voice saying, "Ah Clement Tournon, my old friend, right glad am I to see you. So his Eminence has let you out of the cage—what man, never droop! we will soon restore your strength. This Cardinal of ours has heard how men tame wild beasts—by keeping them on low diet—and he has determined to try the same plan with your people of Rochelle. But I have a nice snug cabin for you, here in a corner of the trench, and a good soft bed, all ready with a boiled pullet, and we will have a good stoup of wine together, as we had when you sold me that diamond aigrette."

"Ah sir," said the feeble voice of Clement

Tournon, "you drank seven eighths of the stoup yourself, saying you were thirsty and needed it. I need it most now I fear."

"And so you shall drink the seven eighths now," said Bassompierre gaily. "Here, some one, bring us a litter. We will carry him home in triumph. The best of goldsmiths shall have the best of welcomes."

"Farewell for a few hours," said Edward in a low voice, approaching the old man's side and pressing his hand. "I must away up to the Cardinal to shew him I keep faith. But I leave you in good hands, dear friend, and will be with you again early to-morrow."

Thus saying he turned away, rejoined the young officer and rode off with him as fast as he could go in order to present himself before Richelieu had retired to rest.

Though probably burning with curiosity, Edward's companion did not venture to ask any questions in regard to Rochelle, but merely pointed to the large packet containing the

cup, which Edward carried slung to his cross-belt, saying in a jocular tone, "I suppose Monsieur de Langdale, that is not a havresac of provisions, for they do say that article is somewhat scanty in the city."

"Oh no," replied Edward, "this is something too hard to eat, it belongs not to me, but his Eminence. I wish it contained something I could eat, for I have tasted nothing since I left you this morning."

"They fast long in Rochelle," said the young man drily, "but you will be able to get something up at the Chateau."

"I must report myself first," answered Edward; and on they rode without further conversation.

Edward was destined to wait longer for his supper than he expected, for he was detained in the Cardinal's anti-chamber nearly an hour; at the end of that time some five or six gentlemen came forth from Richelieu's room and Edward's name was called by the usher.

The Minister was standing when the young gentleman entered and was evidently in no humour for prolonged conversation.

"Have you brought the old man?" he said.

"Yes, my Lord Cardinal," replied Edward. "I left him at the outposts; he was too weak to come on."

"Then the famine in the city is severe, I suppose;" observed the Cardinal.

"It is, your Eminence," answered Edward, "but I was permitted to see very little."

"Blindfolded?" asked Richelieu.

"Yes," answered Edward, "but they may hold out some time I think."

"How long?" demanded the Minister.

"With their spirit perhaps a month;" replied Edward.

"A month!" repeated Richelieu. "Impossible. Did you hear of no tumults?"

"None whatever," replied Edward.

"What have you there?" next demanded

the Cardinal pointing to the cup and its covers, which Edward had now detached from his belt.

"It is that work of art I mentioned, sir;" replied the young man taking it from the parchment bag, and unwrapping the many papers in which it was enfolded.

Richelieu took it from his hands, gazed at it for a moment or two with evident admiration, and then set it down on the table saying, "Beautiful, beautiful indeed!—Have you heard any thing from England?" he continued abruptly.

"No," answered Edward, but instantly correcting himself, he added, "Yes, I forget I found a letter waiting me, but I have not opened it. It is merely from my old tutor."

"Let me see it," said Richelieu in a tone that admitted of no refusal.

Edward took it from the pocket of his coat, and gave it to him in silence.

Without the least ceremony Richelieu opened

it, and after looking at the date, gave it back again saying, "Why, it is six months old; and I have news not much more than seven days. The English fleet is just ready to sail, it seems, and only waits for your mighty Duke to lead them. He will find some stones in his way before he harbours in Rochelle. But now good night, Monsieur Edward Langdale. Be here to-morrow betimes; and we will talk more. Just now, I am tired and must to rest."

CHAPTER X.

SPACE is growing short, and we have much to tell. It was several weeks after the period of which we have just been writing when Edward Langdale and old Clement Tournon, now restored to health and to some degree of strength, were in the cabinet of the great Minister of France. Manifold papers were before them, and Richelieu's brow was cloudy and stern, but the old Syndic of the gold-

smiths of Rochelle was as calm and seemingly as much at ease as when he first encountered Edward Langdale in the streets of his city.

"Your Eminence then will not accept it," he said. "There are things which you do not consider. True, they are, as you say, pressed by famine. They may, or they may not, for I have no correct information—be forced to surrender or die for want of food within four days; but if I know the people of Rochelle they will die, rather than surrender, unless they have better terms than these. It is useless to propose them. I should be in some sort deceiving your Eminence, were I to be the bearer of such offers. I know that without the free exercise of their religion being assured to my fellow citizens, die they will—of famine or pestilence, or by cannon balls. I cannot undertake to propose such terms."

"Are you aware?" asked Richelieu in slow but emphatic language, "that seven days ago George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, was

stabbed at Portsmouth by an assassin named Felton, and died upon the spot ?”

Edward Langdale turned pale at the terrible news ; but not the slightest mark of emotion was apparent upon the face of Clement Tournon. Old men are not easily moved, and he was thinking only of Rochelle.

“ Possibly ;” he said in a quiet tone. “ I always thought he would die a violent death. But the hopes of the people of Rochelle never rested, my Lord Cardinal, upon the Duke of Buckingham.”

“ Upon what then did they rest ?” asked Richelieu in some surprise.

“ Upon the hand of God,” replied Clement Tournon—“ upon the winds and waves, His ministers. The storms which annually visit this coast have been long delayed this year, but when they do come they will come more fiercely ; and every man in Rochelle knows that the marvellous dyke your Eminence has built will be but as a bed of reeds before

them. Succour will pour in the moment the port is open, and the citizens, refreshed and comforted, will be ready to resist again all efforts to control their consciences."

"Pshaw!" said Richelieu, "this point of religion is but a name."

"Not for the people of Rochelle," said Clement Tournon. "We are loyal subjects of the King of France, we are willing to be obedient in all temporal things, but we will never profess one faith while we hold another; we will never resign our right to worship God according to our own belief."

"Well, well, that will be easily settled," said the Cardinal taking a pen and striking three or four lines from a writing on the table. "I am not fighting against any man's sincere faith. I am warring against rebellion. Read that, sir. Will that be received?"

"Not without a clause securing to the people of Rochelle the full and free exercise of their religion," said the old Syndic resolutely.

"That is what I mean to grant," said the Cardinal, though a slight cloud passed over his brow, and seemed to indicate that the concession was made less willingly than he pretended. But in truth Richelieu had heard that very day that the English fleet had sailed, notwithstanding the death of the High Admiral. One severe storm, and all the labour of many months might be destroyed, and Rochelle as safe as ever; and there were indications in the sky which threatened such an event. "That is what I mean to grant," he repeated, "have it put in what words you will, so that nothing be inserted which shall give a turbulent people pretence for levying war upon the King. Call me a Secretary, Monsieur de Langdale."

Edward obeyed, and the terms offered by the Cardinal were written out fair, with a clause guaranteeing to the Rochellois the full and unmolested exercise of their religion. This paper formed the basis of that remark-

able treaty soon afterwards signed, which, for its moderation, has been the wonder of all historians. It is true that the Cardinal de Richelieu had many reasons for desiring peace as speedily as possible. It is true that the Rochellois had good reason to hope that relief of some kind would be afforded them ere long. But it is no less true that thousands had perished of famine within those walls, and that in a few days more no soldiers could have been found to man the walls, and corpses only would have opposed the entrance of the royal troops. There can be no doubt that a wise and politic clemency characterized the proceedings of the Minister, and that had he waited till the sick King's return to the camp, harder conditions would have been imposed. He seems not to have heeded where the glory of success or the honour of clemency might fall, so that his great purposes were accomplished; and applied to his conduct towards Rochelle, as applied to a later period of his life, the words

of one of his historians, are neither fulsome nor unjust, where he says, "France triumphed within and without the realm. Foreign enemies themselves proclaimed the superior genius of the Cardinal, and the Huguenots, even while sighing over the ruins of their fortresses dismantled by his orders, and under his eyes, could not but acknowledge his affability, his readiness to adopt all gentle expedients, and the fidelity with which all his engagements were observed."

And what became of Edward Langdale all this time? He remained in the Royal court not as a prisoner—not exactly free. It was impossible for him to travel through France, and to pass into England without safe conduct of some kind, and Edward soon divined that—whether from suspicion or for some other motive he knew not—Richelieu had determined not to let him depart till Rochelle had surrendered. The Minister became more difficult of access also after the King had

returned to the camp, and the long and more familiar conversations which Edward had enjoyed with him previously were altogether at an end. He was courteous and kind when the young man was admitted to his presence, but when Edward pressed for permission to depart the answer always was, "In a few days." On one occasion, indeed, the natural impatience of Edward Langdale's disposition caused him to burst forth with something beyond frankness, and he said bluntly ; " Your Eminence has promised to let me go for the last six weeks. Now six weeks are nothing to you, but they are all important to me ; for I have only one crown and two livres in my pocket, with two servants and myself to furnish, to say nothing of the horses, who are as badly off as if they were citizens of Rochelle, and besides—"

"That will be soon amended," said Richelieu with a slight smile. "Give me some more paper off that table," and he wrote an order

upon the treasurer of his household for the payment to Monsieur Edward Langdale of the usual salary of a gentleman in ordinary to the King.

"My lord Cardinal, how am I to take this money?" asked Edward, "England and France are still at war."

"Then take it as a prisoner," said Richelieu somewhat sternly. "Do not talk nonsense, lad, but you said besides—what is there besides?"

"If you had read the letter I showed your Eminence," replied Edward, "You would have seen that my presence is absolutely required in England upon business of much importance to myself."

"What letter—when? Oh I remember, when you brought me the cup. I cannot help thinking, notwithstanding, you are as well here for the time. But speaking of the cup, I pray you, put a price upon it."

"I cannot sell a gift that was given me by

my father on my birthday. The very act of giving places an obligation on the receiver not to sell. But none not to give, and I trust your Eminence will condescend to receive it on the only terms on which I can part with it."

"Well," said Richelieu, "I will take it on those terms, and will direct my good friend Monsieur Mulot, to give you back the papers that envelope it. They seem to belong to you, for I see the name of Langdale frequently mentioned. Guard them safely till some more learned head than your own has examined them; for few men know the value of scraps of old paper. Sometimes they will raise a man to wealth and power. Sometimes throw him headlong down. God knows whether that same art of writing has done more good or harm in the world. Cadmus, who invented letters, they say, was the same man who sowed the serpent's teeth and reaped an iron harvest. Is not this an allegory, Master

Langdale ? Go and consider of it for I am busy just now."

Not long after this conversation the good but stupid Father Mulot, brought to the young gentleman the bundle of papers in which the cup had been enveloped ; and entered into a long disquisition upon the various differences between the Catholic and Protestant faiths. He was evidently bent upon converting his hearer from his religious errors ; but Edward was evidently obdurate to the kind of eloquence which he displayed, and the good man left him rather in pity than in anger. To examine the papers was Edward's next task ; but he could make nothing of them. Some pages were wanting ; others were mutilated, and though he saw his father's and his mother's name in many places, yet no light could be obtained as to the import of the documents in which they were mentioned. Only one gleam of significance appeared throughout the whole. There was

one passage which stated that Richard Langdale, Baronet, with the full and free consent of his wife Dame Heleonora Langdale in virtue of the last will and testament of Henry Barmont her uncle, Lord of the Manor of Buckley as aforesaid, which consent was testified by her hand and seal, unto the within written lease and demise, did leave give and grant unto William Watson, his heirs and assigns, for the term of twenty one years, from the fifth day of——”.

Here the manuscript stopped, the page which followed being torn off, but at the same time, though he had no knowledge of law, Edward could perceive that an admission of the absolute rights of his mother, over the Manor of Buckley, under the will of her uncle, was implied. He resolved then to follow the advice of the Cardinal, and preserve the papers with care. But still his detention in France was exceedingly annoying ; the letter of good old Winthorne had

pressed him earnestly to return to England; and other thoughts and feelings were busy in his bosom urging him in the same direction. He felt himself more than bound—shackled by his engagement to Lord Montagu. Without any definite cause of complaint the links which attached him to that nobleman had been broken. He felt that he had been doubted without cause, that he had been neglected and forgotten in a moment of difficulty and peril, and that the same confidence which had at one time existed between his lord and himself could never be fully restored. Such were the reasons which he urged upon himself, to explain the desire he felt for severing the connection, but perhaps there was another motive which he did not choose to scrutinize so accurately. Fifteen months had passed since he had promised the Cardinal de Richelieu not to seek his young bride for the space of two years, and Richelieu had promised him

that at the end of those two years she should be his. He had no absolute certainty where she was; he knew not what might have become of her: he could only frame vague wild plans for finding and recovering her; and nine months, without a long voyage to England, seemed to his impatient heart, not more than time sufficient to vanquish all the obstacles which might lay between him and her.

In the idleness of the Camp, without post, duty, or occupation, his mind naturally rested for hours each day upon youth's favourite theme. The imaginative, perhaps I may say the poetical temperament which he had inherited from his mother, and which had hitherto in life found so few opportunities of development, and little or no encouragement amidst the hard realities with which he had to deal, had now full sway, and sometimes soothed—sometimes tormented him—with alternate hopes and fears.

Lucette was often the theme of his conver-

sation with good old Clement Tournon, who was daily regaining health and strength. The good old Syndic asked many questions as to Lucette's journey, and told Edward many of the rumours which had reached Rochelle; but it was evident that he knew nothing of that part of Lucette's history which was the most interesting to his young hearer. Feelings which are needless to dwell upon prevented Edward from referring to it himself, and day after day he would ride forth in to the country alone, or walk up and down in the neighbourhood of the Cardinal's residence buried in solitary thought.

To the country house now inhabited by Richelieu was attached a garden in an antique taste, where roses had now ceased to bloom, and the flowers of summer had all passed away. But it was a quiet and solitary place, for the taste of neither soldiers nor courtiers led them that way, and though the gates were always open it was rarely that any one trod the

walks, except one of the cooks with white night cap on his head seeking pot herbs in a bed which lay at the lower part of the ground. Edward Langdale was more frequently there than any one else, and one day towards the evening, as he was walking up and down in one of the cross walks, he saw the Cardinal come forth from the building alone and take his way straight down the centre alley, looking first down upon the ground and then up towards the sky as a man wearied with the thoughts and cares of the business of the day. It seemed no moment to approach him, and Edward somewhat hurried his pace towards a small gate at the end of the garden. He had nearly reached it when the Cardinal's voice stopped him.

“Come hither,” said Richelieu; “and if you are inclined to talk of no business, walk here by me. It is strange that amongst all who are here there is hardly one man with whom one's mind can refresh itself. My

friend, Bois Robert, is too full of jest. It becomes tiresome. Good father Mulet, whom they should have called Mulet, is full of one idea—the conversion of heretics, by fire and sword, pestilence and famine, or what else you like, though I cannot see why to prevent them from being damned in the other world I should be damned in this. I know the verses of Horace are against me, and that every man unreasonably complains of his fate; but I cannot help thinking that of all conditions in the world the fate of a prime Minister is the most anxious, laborious and tiresome.”

“I should think so indeed, your Eminence,” said Edward with a sigh.

“Ha,” said Richelieu, “then you are so little ambitious as to deem it has no advantages?”

“Not so, my Lord,” replied Edward, “It has vast and magnificent advantages—the power to do good, to stop evil—to reward the

good—Ay! and even to punish the bad—to save and elevate one's country. But great and valuable things must always be purchased at a high price, and I can easily conceive that the sense of responsibility, the opposition of petty factions and base intrigues, the stupidity of some men, the cunning devices of others, the importunity and the ingratitude of all, the want of domestic peace, the continual sacrifice of personal comfort, must make the high position your Eminence speaks of, like any thing but a bed of roses."

"You shall have your safe conduct to-morrow morning," said Richelieu. "Such sentiments are sufficient to corrupt the whole court of France, sir, if they were to become general—and men would but act upon them—I should have nothing to do. There would be no one to envy me. Nobody would try to overthrow me. They would only look upon me as the wheel horse of the car of state, and wonder that I could pull along so patiently—

the ingratitude of all!" he repeated in a meditative tone. "Ay! it is but too true! those are the petrifying waters which harden the heart and seem to turn the very spirit into stone—do you know what has been done within this hour, Monsieur de Langdale?"

"No;" replied the young Englishman. "I have heard of nothing important, sir."

"Why I thought it must be at the gates of Paris by this time," said Richelieu. "A treaty has been signed with Rochelle; and a good man—a marvellous good man in his way, says I am no true Catholic, because I will not starve some thousands of men to death, or make them take the Mass with a lie upon their mouths. I do not understand his reasoning, but that is my fault of course; but through this very treaty of Rochelle I think I shall make more real Catholics than he would make false ones. But now, Monsieur de Langdale, you think I have kept you here unreasonably, but you are mistaken. I wished to have news

from various quarters ere I suffered you to go back to England. I need not tell you to return by the month of July next; but for many reasons I desire you should return before. I leave it to yourself to do so or not, but you will find it for your benefit; to-morrow you shall have all the necessary passes, though it is probable that the fall of this very city of Rochelle will lead to peace between France and England. If it do so, remember a conversation which took place between us a good many months ago."

"I will not forget it, my lord Cardinal." replied Edward, "I believe I have always kept my word to your Eminence."

"You have," said Richelieu, "you have, Would to God I could say the same of all men! And now what money will you require for your passages?"


"None, your Eminence," replied Edward. "I have a little property in England, the rents of which accumulated while I was lodged

and fed by good Monsieur de Bourbonne, and I can get what I want at Rochelle."

"Oh go not into that miserable place!" said Richelieu, "at least till all the bodies are interred and it is free from pestilence. This siege will ever be memorable in the annals of the world—for the sufferings of the people—and for the resolution of their leaders also. I can admire great qualities even in my enemies. But here comes Trouson to call me to the King—come to me to-morrow."

CHAPTER XI.

SEVERAL days more passed before Edward actually got his proper passes and safe conduct, but then they came in the most precise style and ample form. His whole person was described with accuracy. He was mentioned as a young English gentleman attached to the Lord Montagu, travelling under the particular protection of his Majesty the King of France, with two *palefreniers*, and other



- servants and attendants; and all governors of towns and provinces, and officers, civil and military as well, throughout the realm of France and its neighbouring countries in amity with that power, not only to let him freely pass, and give him aid and assistance, but to show him every hospitable attention and courtesy on his journey or journeys in any direction whatsoever during the next two years ensuing. The whole was signed by the King's own hand and countersigned by the Cardinal. Though I possess one of these passports myself on parchment, signed with an immense large "Louis," I regret to say it does not bear the countersignature of Richelieu, but it is certain that they were occasionally given under his administration also. At all events Edward comprehended that wherever he bent his steps, no more interruptions of his journey would occur on the part of any of the officers of the crown.

The Cardinal himself he could not see be-

fore his departure, for those were busy times, but on the sixth day the young gentleman re-entered the city of Rochelle with his good friend, Clement Tournon, and went direct to the Syndic's house. The royal soldiers were in possession of the place; the walls were in progress of demolition, and there was an aspect of disappointment and sadness upon the faces of the people generally, though some were rejoicing openly in the return of peace and plenty, little heeding the loss of a certain degree of that liberty which they had at one time cherished as the best of human possessions.

The royal forces, however, had not confined themselves to razing the fortifications; but with that good humour which is one of the chief and most amiable characteristics of the people, had aided the citizens in burying the dead, in cleansing the streets, and in purifying the town generally, so that on the whole the City bore a much more cheerful and happy appearance than it had done when Edward

had last visited it. In the court, before the house of the old Syndic, two of the apprentices were busy rooting out the grass from between the stones, and Marthon herself, with a gay face, though it was still somewhat pale and thin, came running down to greet her old Master. These were all that remained of the once numerous household, and the joy of his return to his ancient dwelling was mingled with sufficient bitterness to draw some natural tears from Clement Tournon's eyes.

Many little incidents occurred to Edward Langdale during his short stay in Rochelle which we need not dwell upon here. Amongst the servants of his host he was in some sort a hero, for the part he had taken in saving their beloved Master. Several of the citizens too came to visit him, and in the stormy night of the second of November, Guiton himself, wrapped in his large mantle, presented himself to pass an hour or two with his old friend and the Syndic's young guest.

It was a night very memorable—much like

that on which Edward had crossed the seas some eighteen months before. The winds burst in sharp gusts over the town, still rising in force and howling as they rose ; the casement shook and rattled, the tiles were swept from the roofs and dashed to pieces in the streets, and rain mingled with sleet dashed in the faces of the passers by. Many died that night of those who were sick in the hospitals. The conversation of the Mayor was by no means cheerful. He had been forced into his high position against his own desire ; he had drawn the sword unwillingly ; but still full of energy and hope he had sheathed it with still less willingness, and saw in the surrender of Rochelle the ruin of the Protestant cause and the destruction of the religious liberties of France. His heart was depressed and all his thoughts were gloomy. Once when one of the fiercest gusts shook the house he burst forth in an absent tone, exclaiming, " Ay, blow, blow ! you may blow now without doing any damage to fortune's favourites.

By the Lord in Heaven, Master Langdale, it would seem that this man Richelieu's fortunes have even bent the clouds and storms to his subjection. Here, that tempestuous sea which was never known for six weeks to an end, to be without storm and shipwreck, has been as calm and tranquil as a fish pond in a garden for months; ever since that accursed dyke was first commenced; and now no sooner is Rochelle lost than up rises the spirit of the tempest. Hark how it howls! At high tide half the dyke that has ruined us will be swept away. Mark my words, young gentleman. By this time to-morrow all the succours which we needed so many months will be able to enter our port in safety."

And it was so; on the following day, more than forty toises of the dyke were carried away; and a fleet of small wine vessels from the neighbouring country entered the harbour without difficulty.

The storm raged fiercely for the next two days, and the time was spent in friendly

intercourse by Clement Tournon and Edward Langdale, who wished to embark from Rochelle but could find no vessel ready or willing to put to sea. Of all the remarkable changes which have taken place in the state of society during the last two hundred years—changes which produce and will daily produce other changes—none is so wonderful as in the facility of locomotion. The change from the caterpillar to the butterfly, is not so great. Go back two hundred years and you will find nothing but delay and uncertainty. Ay, within a shorter space than that, the back of your own horse, the inconvenient inside of a heavy coach going three miles an hour, or the still slower waggon with its miscellaneous denizens, or the post horse with its postillion riding beside it, were in every part of Europe the only means afforded to the traveller of journeying from place to place over the land; while over the water slow ships could only be found occasionally at certain ports, and their departure, and arri-

vals, depended upon a thousand other chances and events than the pleasure of the winds and waves. It is only wonderful that a voyage did not occupy a life time. Now—but it is no use telling my readers what this now is. He knows it as well, that he forgets even the inconveniences that he himself has suffered, perhaps a score or two of years ago, and can hardly conceive the possibility of the hardships, the troubles, and disappointments of a journey in the seventeenth century, till he takes up some of the memoirs or romances of that day, and finds a whole host of minor miseries recorded, which render an expedition to Mount Sinai, but a joke in comparison. It is true that our present system has its evils as well as its benefits—received by different persons according to their different professional, or habitual tastes. The picturesque traveller will tell you that you lose one half of the scenery: the timid traveller that you risk breaking your neck; the police officer that thieves, and swindlers

get off much more easily than they used to do, and Members of Parliament that their constituents are a great deal too near at hand. But there are compensations for all these little troubles, and especially in the case of the police officer, for if the thief or swindler has easy means of getting away, there are, thanks to electric telegraphs, more easy means still of catching him.

All Edward's preparations were made; the calculation was easy also of what rents had accumulated in the hands of good Doctor Winthorne, and to get the amount in gold and silver was easier still with Clement Tournon at his right hand. But as there seemed, upon enquiry, no probability whatever of a ship sailing soon from Rochelle, within a reasonable time, Edward determined to run across the Country to Calais, between which port and England there was always a desultory trade carried on even in time of war, down to the reign of the third George.

"I shall see you soon again Edward," said

old Clement Tournon, as the young gentleman descended the stairs to mount his horse.

"I trust so ;" said Edward, "but I really cannot tell how soon I shall return."

"Nor I how soon I shall go over ;" said the old man with a smile. "I have business at Huntingdon, and if you are in that neighbourhood a month hence we shall meet there. You have told me all the places where you intend to stop, and I have made a note of it, so that I shall easily find you wherever you are."

Edward was surprised, but not so much perhaps as might have been expected, for, from some vague hints which his good old host let drop, he had gathered that Clement Tournon, steadfast and perhaps a little bigotted in the protestant faith, had a strong inclination to make England his future home. He had been there often ; he loved the country and the people ; and still more the religion ; and most of the ties between him and Rochelle

seemed to have been severed, when the city lost its independence. Often, in Edward's hearing, he had called England the land of comfort and peace—alas, it was not destined long to remain so—and even that very day he had remarked that the state of France, with its constant broils, intrigues and factions, might suit a young and aspiring spirit, but was not fitted for declining years.

He and his young friend parted with deep and mutual regret. It is seldom that so much friendship ever exists between the old and the young, but each might feel that he owed the other his life, and not by any sudden act which might be the result of a momentary impulse, but by calm determined persevering kindness which could not but have a far deeper source.

This has been a very short chapter, but we may as well change the scene; for our space, according to the law of the Goths and Vandals, which altereth not, is very short also.

CHAPTER XII.

THE days of vis-a-vis, lined with sky blue velvet, had not come, though as any one who is read in the pleasant Antoine Hamilton must know, one generation was sufficient to produce them; but had they been in existence there were no roads for them to travel upon; for we hear that just about this time one of the presidents of the parliament of Paris lost his life by the great imprudence of travelling in

a large heavy coach over a French country road.

I was in great hope at this place, to be enabled to introduce for the gratification of my readers a solitary horseman, but I am disappointed, for Edward Langdale, now that I have again to bring him on the scene, has good Pierrot La Grange with him, and it would never do to have a solitary horseman, two.

It was on a road leading from London into the heart of the country, that Lord Montagu's Page—Lord Montagu's Page no longer, for he had formally resigned his attendance upon that nobleman—rode along on a cold bright wintry evening with the renowned Pierrot La Grange, whose face by the adherence to the total abstinence system, though much less brilliant in hue, had become smoother, plumper, and fairer. Both he and his master were well armed, as was the custom of the day, and each was a likely man enough to repel any-

thing like attack on the part of others; for he it remarked that Edward Langdale was very much changed by the passage of twenty months over his head since first we introduced him to the reader. He was broader, stronger, older, in appearance; and though of course there was nothing of the mould of age about him, yet, all the batterings and bruising he had gone through had certainly stamped manhood both on his face and form. He had a very tolerable beard also, at least as far as moustache and royal were concerned, trimmed in that shape which the pencil of Vandyke has transmitted to us in his portraits of some of the most memorable characters in modern history. It is probable that he had grown a little also, for at his age men will grow, notwithstanding all the world will do to keep them down. He was, in short, somewhat above the middle height, which is more serviceable in the field than in the ring.

At the crossing of two roads, one of which

ran into Cambridgeshire, while the other took towards Huntingdon, was a small, low Inn. I mean low in structure, for it was by no means low in character. It was one of the neatest Inns I ever set my eyes on, for it was standing in my day, and is probably standing still, with its neat well white-washed front, its carved doorway, its various gables, and its mullioned windows, and the lozenge-shaped panes set in primitive lead. To the right of the Inn, as you looked from the door upon the road, was a very neat farm yard, half full of golden straw, with a barn and innumerable chickens—chanticleers of all hues and colours, and dame Partletts of every breed. Beyond the barn, at the distance of fifty or sixty yards, ran a beautiful clear stream which crossed both the roads very nearly at their bifurcation and which though so shallow as only to wash gently the fetlock of the passenger's horse, was and must be still renowned for its beautiful trout,

silvery with gold and crimson spots, and the flesh the colour of a blush rose. On the other side of the stream about a quarter of a mile farther up was a picturesque little mill, with a group of towering Huntingdon poplars shading it on the east.

Here Edward Langdale drew in his horse, although the sun was not fully down. God knows what made him do so; for he had proposed to ride farther: but there was an aspect of peace and rural beauty, and contented happiness about the whole place, which might touch that latent poetry in his disposition already alluded to. Or it might be that all the fierce scenes of strife and turmoil, and care and danger, he had passed through in the last twenty months, had made his heart thirsty for a little calm repose, and where could he find it so well as there? Expectation, however, is always destined to be disappointed. This is the great moral of the fable of life. The people of the house,

who had much respect for a man who came with an armed servant, and whose saddlebags were well stuffed, gave him a clean comfortable room, looking over the court yard to the river, and served him his supper in the chamber underneath.

It was night before he sat down, but before the fine boiled trout had disappeared the sound of several horses' feet was heard from the road, and then that of voices calling for hostlers and stable boys.

Edward had easily divined from his first entrance into the house, that this which he now occupied was the only comfortable public room in the Inn, although there was another on the other side of the passage where neighbouring farmers held their meetings, and smoked their pipes. He expected, therefore, that his calm little supper would be interrupted, and was not at all surprised to see a gentleman of good mien, a little below the middle age, followed by two or

three attendants enter the parlour and throw himself into a chair.

The stranger cast a hasty and careless glance around, and then gave some directions to one of his followers in the French language. It was not the sort of half French, spoken a good deal in the Court of England at that time, but whole, absolute, perfect French, with French idioms, and a French tongue.

As long as the conversation referred to nothing more than beasts and baggage, and supper and good wine, Edward took no notice, but went on with his meal, anxious to finish it as soon as possible. But soon after, when the person he was speaking to, had left the room, the stranger began another sort of discourse with another of his followers, and commented pretty freely, and with some wit upon the state of parties at the Court of England.

Your pardon, sir, for interrupting you," said Edward at once. "My servant and myself

both understand French, and it would be neither civil nor honest to overhear your conversation without giving you that warning."

The other thanked him for his courtesy, adding "you are a Frenchman of course."

"Not so," answered Edward, "I am an Englishman, but I have spent some time in France."

Next came a great number of those questions which nobody can put so directly without any lack of politeness as a Frenchman. How long he had lived in France? whom he knew there? when he had left it.

Edward answered all very vaguely; for he never had any great relaxation of tongue, but the stranger caught at the admission that he had been only a fortnight in England, exclaiming, "Then you must have been in France when Rochelle surrendered."

"I was," answered the young gentleman. "It is not quite three weeks since I left that City."

“Ha!” said the stranger eyeing him from head to foot. “Will you favor me, sir, by telling me the state of the place and the condition of its inhabitants. It is a subject in which I take great interest. Methinks they surrendered somewhat promptly when succour was so near.”

“Not so, sir,” replied Edward. “When men having nothing to eat, when they have seen their fathers, and their brothers, and their mothers, and their sisters die of famine in their streets, when the very rats and mice of a city are consumed, and the wharves have been stripped of muscles and limpets, they must either die or surrender. There is no use of dying, for death is the worst sort of capitulation, and the city becomes the enemy’s without even a parchment promise.”

“Ay; and was it really so bad?” said the other.

“More than one third of the inhabitants had died,” said Edward, “another third were

dying, and the rest were so feeble that the walls might be said to be manned by living corses."

"You excite my curiosity and my passions," said the other. "May I ask if you had any command in Rochelle?"

"None," replied the young gentleman, "by accident I was in it for a day during the siege, and saw how much they could endure. I was in it after the siege, and saw how much they had endured. Though Rochelle fell at last, her defence is one of the most glorious facts in French history."

The stranger looked down upon the ground and replied nothing for several minutes, but his companion with whom he had been conversing familiarly took up the conversation and asked after several of the citizens of Rochelle, whom Edward was personally acquainted with or knew by name. The solemn words, "He is dead—she is dead—all the family died by famine—He died of the

pestilence," were of sad recurrence. But the stranger remarked, "We know that Guiton is alive, for he signed the treaty."

"He tried hard to die first," said Edward, "but nothing seemed to break his iron frame, and the people became clamorous."

"And what became of the good old Syndic Tournon?" asked the first stranger.

"He is alive and well," answered Edward.

"Ah! but he would have been dead and buried," exclaimed Pierrot, who could refrain no longer, "if it had not been for you, sir."

"Indeed!" said the stranger, "let me enquire how that happened?"

"It matters not, sir," replied Edward making a sign to Pierrot to hold his tongue. "What the man says may be partly true, partly mistaken, but although I am willing to give any one interested, general news, I must decline referring to matters entirely personal when conversing with strangers."

"Well, then, let us talk of other subjects,"

said the first stranger. "I cannot consent to part with a gentleman so lately from my own land as that movement of your plate seems to imply. Supper I shall take none, for the news that has flowed in upon me for the last fortnight has not tended to strengthen my appetite. Wine, however, the resource of the sad and the sorry, I must have. They tell me it is good here. Will you allow me to try some of that which stands at your right hand?"

Edward ordered Pierrot to bring some fresh glasses, and put the bottle over to his self-invited guest. The stranger drank some and saying, "it is very fair," immediately ordered more to be brought, while Pierrot bending over Edward's chair as if to remove the dish before him, whispered in his ear, "it is the Prince de Soubise."

With all his habitual self-command Edward could not refrain from a slight start. The colour too mounted to his cheek, with some

feelings of anger, but he was glad of the warning, and did not suffer what was passing in his heart to appear. The conversation turned in a different course from that which it had before assumed, Soubise referring no more to the subject of Rochelle, though his companion, who seemed a friend of inferior rank, often turned towards that topic. Whenever he did so, the Prince immediately asked some question as to Edward's knowledge of France and its inhabitants, and the young gentleman, to say the truth, took some pleasure, after the first effects of surprise were over, in puzzling him by his answers. He had passed over so much of France that his intimate acquaintance with the country excited Soubise's astonishment, and from localities his questions turned to persons. "As you have been in Loraine," he said, "you have probably seen the beautiful and witty Duchess de Chevreuse?"

"I have the honor of knowing her well," replied Edward.

"Do you know the Duke de Montbazon?" asked the Prince.

"Not in the least," replied Edward.

"The Cardinal de Richelieu?" continued Soubise.

"I have seen his Eminence frequently," said the young gentleman, "and have had audiences of him; but as to knowing the Cardinal, that can be said but by few I imagine."

Soubise smiled. "The Duchess is more easily known," he answered, "but the death of her lover Chalais must have affected her, poor thing. Did you ever meet with him?"

"Not exactly," replied Edward with a slight shudder at the memory. "I saw his head cut off, but did not know him personally."

The reference caused a momentary pause in the conversation; and then Soubise said in an indifferent tone, "as you have been much in that part of the country you must probably have seen a Duc de Rohan?"

"I had the honor of meeting him once," replied Edward fully on his guard.

"He is a relative of mine ;" said Soubise.

Edward merely bowed his head and the Prince proceeded to ask if there had been any news of him current when the young gentleman was in France.

"The last I heard of him," said Edward, "was a rumour that, after menacing the right of the King's army, till a party had been sent out to cut off his retreat, he had, by a skilful night march through the woods in the rear, effected his escape and fallen back upon Xaintonge."

Soubise seemed desirous of prolonging the conversation ; but Edward soon after retired to his chamber, resolved to be up by sunrise and pursue his way. His determination was vain, however. Though he was on foot early, Soubise was up before him, and they met at the door of the Inn, where their horses were already standing. A quick bow on either part was their only salutation, and as there were two roads, Edward would willingly have

seen which the Prince selected. As he did not mount, however, the young gentleman followed the path he had previously proposed to take, namely, that towards Huntingdon, and three or four minutes after heard the more numerous party of Soubise coming up at good speed.

"Ah, young gentleman," said the Prince, riding up to his side, "so we are going the same way. Permit me to bear you company."

Edward bowed his head somewhat coldly, for he did not desire the companionship. He might have learned some policy in the varied life he had led, and it certainly would have been politic in him to count the good opinion of the man by his side; but even had the nature of his character permitted it, he believed it would be of no use. Generous and frank, Soubise was known to be somewhat obstinate, as well as hasty, and Edward thought, "I would rather win her in spite of him, than by his aid."

Their journey, therefore, did not promise to be very agreeable, and when the Prince demanded which way his course ultimately lay, the young gentleman replied, "I go towards Huntingdon, Sir, but if that is the direction of your journey, I shall have to leave you before we reach the town, for I have to turn off the high road some miles on this side of Buckley."

"And so have I," said Soubise, "but we may as well make the way pleasant by each other's society for as long as our roads lie together. Do you know this country as well as you know France?"

"This part of the country," replied Edward, "for I was born and brought up, not many miles from where we are now riding."

"Indeed," said the Prince, "I should have thought by your speech you had passed the greater part of your life in my own land. Do you know what that little river is just before us?"

"It is the Ivil," answered Edward, "which runs into the Ouse lower down."

"The Ouse!" said Soubise. "I do not know much English, but that seems to me an ugly name. If I recollect, Ouse means mud, slime."

"We are a plain spoken people," answered the young man, "and usually give things the name we think they deserve. The Ouse in many places is a sluggish, muddy stream, and our good ancestors applied the name they judged most appropriate."

"'Tis as well they do," said Soubise with a sigh, "as in France we have a different habit. Our more excitable imaginations take fire at a name; and we are apt to decorate very plain things with fanciful appellations; but this leads to frequent disappointment. Which is the happiest people must depend upon whether it is best in a hard world to see things as they are, or to see them as we would have them."

"We are often forced to see them as they are," replied Edward, "and if we always did so, there would be no disappointments."

"Nor much happiness," said Soubise.

Thus conversing they rode on; but we must pass lightly over the talk with which they enlivened the way, merely observing that Lucette's cousin rose not inconsiderably in Edward's opinion as they went. Nay more, his manners were so graceful, his thoughts so just, his conversation so varied, that the young Englishman could not but feel pleased with his company and inclined to like himself; but yet, in the true English spirit, he said in his own heart, "Oh yes, he is very charming now he is in a good humour. The Devil is so when he is pleased; but methinks I could conjure forth the horns and hoofs, if I were but to tell him who I am."

At length, the scenes through which they passed painfully familiar to Edward's eye—spots he had known well, cottages he had

visited, houses belonging to old friends of his family. The very trees and shrubs and little water courses seemed like old acquaintances calling back times passed and appealing to regret. He grew grave and cold. The chilly feeling which had first fallen upon him not many years before, but which had somewhat passed away during the last few months, returned and many memories as ever brought their long train of sorrows with them.

Not far from little Barford, a fine sloping lawn came down to the road side, separated from the highway merely by a thick, well-trimmed hedge, broken by some fine groups of trees; and, looking up, a large square house with many windows and a trim garden terraced and ornamented with urns and statues could be seen at the distance of a quarter of a mile. There were several men in the grounds engaged in various country employments, and Edward said within himself, "He is taking care of the place at all events."

At the same moment Soubise observed "that is a fine chateau! Do you know to whom it belongs, and what it is called? It is so long since I was in this part of England that I forget the places."

"That is called Buckley Hall," replied Edward. "It belongs to Sir Richard Langdale."

"How is that?" said Soubise suddenly, as if something surprised him; but Edward did not answer, and the Prince merely said. "Let us pull up for a moment and look at it."

It was torture to Edward to stay, but he paused for a moment, and then said; "I fear I must go on for I have still some distance to ride. My road, too, is here to the left."

"Ay," said Soubise, "so does mine. Let us go on."

"Are you sure you are right?" asked Edward Langdale, "Huntingdon is straight before you."

"Oh, I am right," answered the Prince, "I turn just beyond Buckley."

Edward had nothing more to say, but he could not help beginning to think that his adventure with the two blacksmiths seemed likely to come over again. Somewhat quickening their pace they rode on, and Edward made an effort to cast off the melancholy mood which had fallen upon him, and even the impression which the unsought society of a man who had spoken of him in such insulting terms had produced at first, and the conversation between him and Soubise became lively and cheerful. Mile after mile passed, and at length after proceeding for more than an hour and a half on a little bank by the side of the river appeared an old church with its grey ivy-clad tower, and groups of yews in the church yard. Beyond, at the distance of some two or three hundred yards, was one of those fine antique houses, built of stone, which were erected in the end of Elizabeth's reign, and in the earlier part of that of the most pompous and conceited of Kings. Thick

walls and square windows, little useless towers, and somewhat peaked roof, spoke a good deal of King James. But the lawn, as soft as velvet, the groups of shrubs, and the garden well trimmed and swept, even in the winter time, spoke of more modern taste.

"I fear I shall have to quit you here, sir," said Edward as they approached the gate with its two massive stone pillars, with large balls at the top. "This is the end of my journey."

"What is the name of this place," asked Soubise.

"Applethorpe," answered Edward, "the residence of Doctor Winthorne."

"Ha!" said Soubise. "Then we shall not part so soon; this is the end of my journey also."

Edward could not refrain from turning round and gazing in his face with a look of most profound surprise; but the Prince made no further remark; and after pulling in their

horses, while one of the servants dismounted and opened the gates, they rode up to the large arched door of the house. A heavy bell hanging outside soon brought forth an old domestic dressed in dark grey, who gazed earnestly first at Soubise and then at Edward, both of whom had sprung to the ground while he was opening the door. At first he evidently recognised neither, but a moment after the light of honest satisfaction brightened his countenance, and holding forth his hand to Edward he exclaimed, "Oh, Master Ned, how glad I am to see you, and how glad the Doctor will be! he has been looking for you for months. But he is not at home now and may not come home for an hour. But come in, come in; everything is ready for you—your old room just as you left it, not a book moved, nor a gun, nor a fishing rod—only when I went in to-day to dust the things I saw the ink had dried up in the horn, and was going to put in fresh this very day."

Edward shook the old man warmly by the hand, and turning to the Prince de Soubise he said, "If I understand you right, sir, you come to visit Doctor Winthorne. He is out, the servant says, but I have interest enough in this house to invite you to enter till his return. He will be back in an hour and happy, I am sure, to entertain you. But knowing my old preceptor's habits well, allow me to hint that it will be necessary to send your attendants into the village, as I shall send my servant; for being a clergyman, he objects to having in his house what he calls, "swash bucklers serving men", and his rules apply to all, however high the quality of his guests."

Soubise smiled; and ushering him into the library, Edward proceeded, amidst the somewhat garrulous joy of the old footman, to direct Pierrot to take the other men down to the village Inn, to tell the host there to tend on them well for Master Neds

sake, and then to return as soon as might be with his saddle bags.

The Prince merely ordered baggage to be brought up, directing his men to take care of themselves, and seeming fully satisfied that he would be a welcome guest. He took some books from the shelves of the library, examined them cursorily and put them back again. "The good Doctor seems to have improved much in worldly matters. He has attained apparently the state he always desired—competence and enough to have a good library. Can you imagine a man more happy?"

"Perhaps not," said Edward gravely. "I believe circumscribed desires and moderate fortunes attain the height of human felicity."

"Not so;" said Soubise, "I believe every human life must be looked at as an aggregate; and skilful would be the calculator who could reduce to an exact sum how much joy and how much sorrow is required to equalise a given portion of calm and unimpassioned

existence. All these things are as the individual views them. We have nothing, in this life, by which to measure the real value of any object, but our own tastes. You may like a pearl better than a diamond. I may esteem the flashing lustre of the one more than the calm serenity of the other. That man is only happy who obtains what he really desires. But here come our men, I see, with the baggage."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE Prince de Soubise stood at the window of the library of Applethorpe alone; for Edward, had made an excuse to leave him, not thinking himself bound to play the host in a house which was not his, nor to act as entertainer of a man whom he had some good cause—as he thought—to dislike. Soubise was then past forty, however, and he did not—as indeed who does in middle life?—look upon trifles with the serious

view which one takes of them in earlier years. "Hasty and quick in quarrel," applies to small as well as great things, and Heaven knows how much patience we acquire each day by the mere habit of endurance. He received the young man's apology in good part then, and while Edward Langdale went to speak to every old servant, and then to change his travel-stained dress, he stood, as I have said, at the window, and gazed forth upon a scene to be viewed in no other country under the sky—a home scene of English life. It is probable of no age, of no time ; for it is an impress of the mind and character of the people. But I must not dwell upon it. The chapter of descriptions has gone by. Soubise gazed out, compared that which was before his eyes with that on which they might have rested in his own country, admired what he saw, and perhaps—in the desponding mood which certainly then affected him—felt sorry that France had not as calm, as peaceful, and as happy a look as an English country village.

After he had continued gazing for some ten minutes upon the road before him, appeared an elderly man upon a fine stout horse, with clerical hat and cassock turned up, and a servant following him on a still better beast. They both rode forth; and though the first sat his steed somewhat after the fashion of a sack of wheat, it was clear that the saddle was quite familiar to him, and the slouching shoulders and negligent air were more the consequences of perfect use and habit than of awkwardness. The servant pulled back the gate; his master dashed through, and in a moment after Doctor Winthorne was at the door.

The old footman ran forth to give him entrance, and a few words passed of which Soubise only heard the words "Ned, come back! tell the dear fellow to come down. A stranger! Well we must see strangers," and the door of the library opened.

Doctor Winthorne gazed on Soubise, and the Prince at him, without any sign of recognition, as they approached each other. But suddenly

the reverend gentleman stopped, exclaiming, "God bless you, Monsieur Soubise ! on my life, sir, I am glad to see you. When did you come over ? How fares it with you ? You are older by a good deal, but you look well. I am right—surely the Prince de Soubise ?"

"The same, my good old friend," said the Prince. "I am not surprised you doubt, for I feel I am much changed. It is ten long years since we met, and with me they have been stormy years."

"So I have heard," said the good Doctor, "though news travels but slowly in our poor country. But I have watched your noble struggles as closely as I could ; and I have felt great interest in them all, though you, every one of you, made great mistakes. And now Rochelle is lost ! God help us ! It is a sad case, but she could hold out no longer, and that Mayor Guiton is a noble man."

"He is indeed," said Soubise, "and his cha-

racter has risen in my opinion, by what has been told me by a young gentleman who came hither with me."

"Odds my life!" cried the old Doctor, "my old boy, Ned!—Ned Langdale, I must go, Prince, I must go and hug him. Sir, he is as fine a youth as ever lived, and ought to be a great man. God send he may escape it! But I have not seen him yet. Excuse me: I will be back in a minute. Make yourself at home—make yourself at home. All shall be prepared for you before you can say, amen."

With this somewhat unconnected speech, Dr. Winthorne left the room, and in a few minutes returned with Edward Langdale, who allowed himself to be introduced to the Prince with cold ceremony. "He says," observed Doctor Winthorne, "that somehow you have not treated him well. But we will talk of that after supper. Every thing should be explained between all people; but no explanations should take place fasting. The humours are then in a

bad condition, and as there is no chance in my house of people treating them by potations, we will just calmly regulate them by wholesome food and moderate drink, and then have a clear understanding."

"I am perfectly unconscious," said the Prince; but the Doctor cut him short, exclaiming, "After supper—after supper, my lord! Your apartments are quite ready; let me conduct you."


The old clergyman and the protestant Prince retired from the room, and Doctor Winthorne was nearly half an hour absent. When he returned, however, he shook Edward once more warmly by the hand, saying "Why Ned, my boy, you are grown quite a man. Heaven shew us mercy, you have a beard an ell long. But now tell me all that has happened to you. As to this man up-stairs, he is a good man, a very good man, hasty, but noble and generous. Steady in his friendships, true to his cause. There is some mistake between you and him. He says

your brother Richard wrote to him, or visited him, or something, and he might have treated him with some indignity; but he never saw or heard of you in his life, till last night when he met you at the Inn."

Edward smiled, saying "He must have a short memory."

"Well, well," said Doctor Winthorne, "we will have it all after supper. Now tell me everything you have done and seen and suffered, for I doubt not you have suffered too, my poor boy. We shall have plenty of time if the Prince takes as long to bedizen himself as he used to do. He was a mighty fop in other years, but he has a more soldier-like look now. Well, Ned, give me the whole story."

Edward Langdale willingly enough related succinctly what had befallen him since he parted from the good Doctor nearly two years before. There was a good deal indeed he did not tell, for he knew that the explanations required would be too long for the limited space before him. Indeed



before even the abbreviated narrative was brought to a close, the Prince de Soubise joined them, and they retired into another chamber to supper.

The meal passed over in great cheerfulness; the wine was good, and of that quality which parsons loved in those days; but all partook moderately, and as soon as the servants had withdrawn—for supper at that period of the world's history was served with very nearly the same forms as dinner in the present times—Soubise bowed his head to Edward Langdale, saying, in not very good English, "There must be some mistake between us, sir. I should like to have it set right, for your father was one of my dearest friends. We travelled long together with this worthy minister, and I wish much to remove anything like coldness between myself and his son."

"I really do not know, Monsieur de Soubise," replied Edward, in French, "what mistake there could be. But may I ask if in June of last year you did not write a letter to your brother, the

Duc de Rohan, in which you styled me an insolent varlet? The Duke sent me the letter, and my eyes I think cannot have deceived me."

"No, no," cried Soubise. "Stay—let me remember, I applied that term," he continued, more slowly, "to Sir Richard Langdale, your father's eldest son, who, as I have been told, and as I have still reason to believe, had robbed you of your property—your mother's as well as your father's inheritance. To the latter he might have some claim—even that is doubtful. To the former he had none."

"Unfortunately by the laws of this country he has," said Edward. "But all this is past and over, and ——"

"Stay, stay," said Soubise, interrupting him, "It is not all over yet, it is the very cause of my coming here. I was a witness, sir, to the marriage contract, or settlement as you call it, I believe, between your father and your mother, by which it was agreed that all the property she

possessed, not only at the time, but which might descend to her from her uncle, should belong to her, and descend to her children. In his last letter, when he thought himself dying, good old Clement Tournon informed me that this very property had been taken from you by him, I may well call, your base-born brother. Having done all that I had to do, and been disappointed in all—having seen the noble Buckingham die at my feet, and learned the loss of Rochelle, my first business was to come on here to see right done, if it could be done.”

“There, Edward, there!” said Doctor Winthorne, “I told you he was noble and true.”

“I doubted it not, my dear friend,” replied Edward, “but still the words his highness used were somewhat galling.”

“They never were applied to you, upon my honour;” said the Prince, “as far as I recollect now—for it was a time of hurry and confusion—I had heard that Richard Langdale, whose whole history I knew as well as my daily service, was at

the Court of France soliciting some place from his majesty. My brother wrote to me mentioning only Monsieur de Langdale. Probably it was you he referred to—probably he was deceived as well as myself, although he did not know as much of the circumstances as I did. My cousin, Mirepoix du Vallais, left his child with his dying breath to my charge, enjoining me strictly to have her educated in the protestant faith, and never to suffer her to fall into the hands ——.”

“What!” exclaimed Doctor Winthorne, interrupting him, “dear little Lucette. How is the dear child? Where is she? Oh that I could see her again for an hour, for she was an angel. Do you remember, Edward, that you once had a little sister, and that when you were ill of fever, she disappeared?”

“Was that Lucette?” exclaimed Edward. “Remember, her, my dear sir? Oh, yes. But how can that be? Her death killed my mother I think. Lucette, my sister!” and he gazed

down upon the table, with a chilly, painful feeling at the heart, such as he never had experienced in life before. "I cannot comprehend," he added, "Lucette my sister—my sister not dead!"

"No, no;" cried Doctor Winthorne, "tell him all my Lord the Prince—Lucette is not your sister; she merely passed as such. Your father and your mother took her in very early years, to hide her from her Roman Catholic relations in France, out of love and friendship for this noble gentleman. Those relations were powerful as well as in the neighbouring country; and at length they discovered where she was, and Monsieur de Soubise came over and removed her; first to the town of Brixham, where she remained some years, and thence to France. I had some share in all this too. But you are mistaken, my son, about your mother's death. She grieved to lose her little pet, and wept often and bitterly at her loss; but the real cause of her death was a terrible fire which consumed your father's house when you were very young

There, exposure and injuries received before she could escape, sowed the seeds of that malady which, in this land of ours, like death's gardener, culls the sweetest and most beautiful flowers to decorate the grave."

"Then she is not my sister!" exclaimed Edward. "She is not dead, thank God for that!"

It might be difficult for those who heard it, to know which he thanked God for most; and the exclamation produced a slight smile upon the countenance of Doctor Winthorne. "Methinks, Prince," he said, "this young man must have met Lucette since. You dog, you have told me nothing of that."

But the Prince de Soubise was very grave, "Let us not talk of that part of the subject to-night," he said. "I fear there are painful conclusions before us. But, Master Langdale, my friendship for your father, and my deep gratitude to your saintly mother, makes me most anxious to see you reinstated in her fine property. Let us consult what can be done. I am here ready

to swear I signed the deed as witness with my own hand."

"That will not be sufficient," said Doctor Winthorne, with somewhat of a smile upon his countenance. "In this land we shall require the deed itself; but let us ride over to-morrow to Buckley and see Sykes, an old friend, the hunchbacked attorney; for I cannot help thinking that he knows something more than he will tell to me. For the last six months he has been keeping the place up at his own expense; for I dare say you have heard, Edward, no one has known any thing of Sir Richard for more than twelve months. He draws no rents, sends no orders. His lawyer here has written and sent to Turin, but no intelligence whatever can be procured; and many people think he is dead."

"It is very strange," said the Prince de Soubise, "but I have no belief in his death. Most likely he is wandering somewhere and does not wish the place of his abode to be known. He was always very eccentric."

"Then you know him, my Lord," said Edward, who had not lately mingled in the conversation—for some words which had fallen from Soubise had saddened him.

"I have not seen him for many years," replied the Prince, "but even then he was as strange a boy as I ever saw. There was insanity in the family of his mother, and some people thought the child would grow up an idiot. It was not so, however. Though he was very strange, this strangeness never reached to madness. Fits of moody gloom would come upon him, and he would not speak a word to any one for hours, or if he did it would be with a bitter and supercilious tone, very extraordinary in a mere child. Then again at times he would fly into the most violent fits of passion, and then sink into melancholy. The way I knew all this was, that at your father's request I took some charge of him after his mother's death in the convent; but his behaviour became so bad, that I had to relinquish the trust."

"You applied to him a short time since," said Edward, "a somewhat hard and unpleasant expression. You said that you might almost call him base-born; is it too much to ask that you would give me some information on that point?"

"I know not how to explain," replied Soubise, looking down thoughtfully. "His mother was a very light Italian woman, of a low, bad race. Your father married her beyond doubt before this child was born, but it was only just before, and that with half a dozen stilettos at his throat, for they caught him alone with her, and forced the marriage. Almost as soon as it was over he separated from her, and she went into a convent, her relations spreading absurd stories that they had caused the separation because your father was a protestant. This gained them some favour at the court of Rome, and one of them obtained advancement in the Church, where, after leading a very dissolute life, he was struck with remorse and retired into the most austere

seclusion. This is nearly all I know of the mother ; but it was this knowledge of the young man's birth, character, and connexions, which made me use the term "insolent varlet," which gave you so much offence. I pledge you my honour, however, it was not intended for you, and I should not have applied it probably even to him, had I not been in haste and irritated at the moment."

"Then I hope, my good Lord," replied Edward, "That as the expression was not applied to me, I may look upon all the sentiments and resolutions contained in that letter as unsaid also?"

"Do not press me to-night," said Soubise, very gravely, "I am afraid if I speak now, my reply will pain you. The house of Rohan is a proud house, and I have much to think of; give me a few days for reflection and I will meet you fairly. But in the meantime let us be friends. Your father was the companion of my youth and my most intimate associate. Your

mother, now a saint in heaven, was an angel upon earth, and I would fain have their son's regard."

As he spoke he held out his hand to the young man, who took it respectfully, and shortly after the Prince retired to rest.

CHAPTER XIV.

THOUGH these were days of splendid cavalades, and the neighbourhood of the royal palace of Royston had rendered them not unfrequent some years before in that part of Huntingdonshire, it was not often that such a party presented itself as that which was seen on the day after Edward's arrival in the small village of Buckley. First there was Dr. Winthorne on his tall stout roman nosed

horse; forming the centre of the group. Then on his left Edward Langdale riding a wicked, fiery devil, which screamed and bit at the approach of any other animal, but which he managed with consummate grace and ease; then there was the Prince de Soubise on the Doctor's right, mounted on a powerful Norman charger, and looking very much the soldier and the Prince. Behind them were there servants well mounted and armed, and the whole formed a group which attracted the attention of the villagers, and made even the blacksmith suspend the blows of his sledge hammer to look at the fine horses he longed to shoe.

There was a little old dusty house, on the right hand side of the road as you came from Applethorpe towards the King's highway to Huntingdon, with the gables turned towards the street and a wooden porch carved in curious shapes over some five or six descending steps. On one of the pillars of the porch was hung a curious sort of shield painted with

various colours—a quaint emblem of the Holy Roman Empire—and underneath was written with no great regard to symmetry either in the size or shape of the letters, the words, Martin Sykes, Notary Public, Attorney at law, Solicitor in his most gracious Majesty's Court of Chancery, etc., etc., etc., which etcetras were explained and commented upon by a long inscription on the other pillar.

Before that little porch Dr. Winthorne pulled in his reign, and floundered off his horse, and Soubise and Edward Langdale followed. In the first room on the left hand they found three or four clerks; and at a separate desk, which he could not over top, without assistance, was seated a little old man with very kind features, and a back and chest which assumed a very menacing position in regard to the head.

“Oh Doctor,” he said, slipping off the high stool, which raised him up to the desk. “What

brings you so early to Buckley? Odds my life!—Why I can hardly believe my eyes!—Master Ned, grown into a bearded man of war! My dear boy, how are you? Oh how I have missed you! Missed the trout in the month of May—missed the partridges in September—missed the snipes and the woodcocks in the cold weather, when I have my annual abcess in the lungs—missed thy kind and handsome face at all those times, when a kind word in a youthful voice cheers an old man like me.”

Edward shook him warmly by the hand, and asked after all his ailments kindly, but speedily turned to their companion saying,

“Master Sykes, this is the Prince de Soubise an old friend of both my parents.”

“I remember him well,” said Mister Sykes. “That is to say I do not remember him at all. I mean in person. I do not remember him, for he might as well be Goliath of Gath as the Prince de Soubise, as far as any identifica-

tion on my part could go, but I remember quite well a young gentleman of that name in purpled silk Philimot velvet, laced with gold, slashed velvet breeches, and a sword as long as a barbecuing spit by his side, being present at your father's wedding and witnessing the marriage contract."

"He has got me exactly," said Monsieur de Soubise, "I have had, Mister Notary, to take to lighter but more serviceable weapons since, but if my person is so much changed that you cannot remember me, there are plenty of witnesses here to swear to whom I am, and I expect in a few days my good friend Clement Tournon, Syndic of the goldsmiths of Rochelle, who made and brought over a set of jewels for my friend's bride, and who saw me witness the contract with his own eyes. He remembers the whole deed he says, for it was read over to us before the signature."

"He will be an important witness, sir," said Martin Sykes, "and your Highness will be

more so. It is all coming right as I thought it would," he continued turning to Doctor Winthorne, and rubbing his thin bony hands. "Somewhat long we have been about it, but step by step we are making way. Everything takes time Doctor—even a sermon—as the poor people here know well. The great difference between a law suit and a sermon is that, during the first, people sleep often and sleep badly, and during the second they sleep once and they sleep well. Now, Master Ned, I calculate that we shall get to the end of this suit, and have a decree in our favour—let me see, you are about twenty are not you?—in about forty nine years and seven months,"—he paused a single instant and rubbed his hands, and then added with a smile slightly triumphant, "that is to say if we cannot get the original settlement. But I think we shall get it, Ned, my boy. I think I know where it is. It is most likely badly damaged, but just give me sufficient of it left

to shew some of the signatures, and the date, and then come in these gentlemen as witnesses to prove what it originally contained. Oh we will make a fine little case of it! but parties—we want parties—somebody to fight us, Master Ned.”

“ But if the fight is to last as long as you have said, my dear friend,” remarked Edward Langdale, “ and I am only to succeed when I am sixty nine years and seven months old, I think I had better not begin the battle.”

“ Ay, but you forget the *if*,” said Martin Sykes with a laugh, “ an *if* makes every thing in law. It is as potent as any thing herein before contained to the contrary notwithstanding, or always provided nevertheless; or any other of those sweet phrases with which we double up the sense of our documents, or give a sweet and polite contradiction to what we have just been saying the moment before. As to the battle, my dear young friend, it has begun already. Acting on your behalf, as

your next friend, I have managed to get possession of Buckley, have served Sir Richard's lawyer and agent with all sorts of processes, some sixteen or seventeen, I think, ejectments, quo warrantos, rules nisi, and others; and the poor fool, who is nothing at all unless he has a Londoner at his back, has let me have very nearly my own way, having no orders, not knowing where to get any, and standing like a goose under the first drops of a thunder shower, with his eyes staring and his mouth half open."

"But where is the contract?" asked Monsieur de Soubise in French. "If I understand him right he said he knew where it was."

Edward interpreted, feeling very sure that good Master Sykes was not very abundantly provided with French; but the little lawyer shook his head, saying, "No, no, I did not profess to know where it is, but there is one not very far from here who I think does

know—I think he does—I am sure he does. He tells me a box of valuable papers were lost at the great fire, and he shakes his head and looks wise, and talks of its being made worth his while. He is the most avaricious old devil in the world. It is a curious thing, Ned, all sextons are avaricious. They deal so much with dust and ashes that they learn to like the only sort of dross which does not decay when you bury it. He is a very old man now, and could not enjoy for more than a few months any thing he had, were it millions.”

“What! you are not speaking of the old sexton at Langley are you?” asked Edward. “The man with the lame hip? He used to say he got that injury at the fire, and my father gave him many a guinea for it. I used to give him shillings and sixpences too to make him tell me all about the fire, till one day I caught him taking away a groat I had given to a poor child, and then I knocked him over the shoulder with my fishing rod.

He has never liked me since, but hobbles away into his cottage whenever he sees me, and shuts the door tight."

What there was in this little anecdote which peculiarly struck good Mister Sykes I cannot tell, but he fell into a fit of thought, still standing, for there were no chairs in the room, except one which had lost a leg—in what action I do not know—and the high stools on which the clerks were sitting, if they could be called chairs. He kept a finger of his right hand resting on the side of his nose, however, for two or three minutes, and then suddenly rousing himself he said, "let us go into the house we can sit there and talk. This is a poor place for such company. It does well enough for roystering farmers' sons who have been breaking each other's heads, or for a deputy tax collector, or for gossiping women who have been slandering and been slandered. I do not want them to sit down at all, and that is the reason I have only one

chair with a broken leg, to which I always hand old Mistress Skillet, the Doctor's widow, who abuses every young girl in the place who has got a pretty face, and wears a pink ribbon. Then down she comes and declares she has broken her hip bone, and walks away in great indignation, never coming back until she has another peck of lies upon her stomach. I must not do it any more for she has grown as big as an elephant, and the last time she tumbled she had nearly shaken the office down. Besides, it cost me two ounces of peppermint to bring all those boys out of their convulsions—but, come gentlemen, let us go."

Thus saying, he led the way through a little door at the back of the office across a small passage into an exceedingly neat old fashioned parlour, where, having seated his guests, he rushed at a corner cupboard, and brought forth some tall stalked, cut and gilded wine glasses, and a square-sided bottle likewise cut and gilded, from which he pressed his guests

to help themselves. Monsieur de Soubise remarked it was too early to drink wine, but the old man pressed them saying, "It is not wine at all. It is fine old Dutch Cinnamon," and each having taken a little, good Mister Sykes leaned his arms upon the table, remarking, "now this looks really like the commencement of a conspiracy, and a conspiracy we must have. I have settled it all; we must go over to the old place, that is old Langley Court, Prince. I will enact my own character; the Doctor here is too reverent to undergo transformation. You, my noble sir, must be a French nobleman about to buy Langley Court and Buckley too, in fact half the estates in the neighbourhood. Edward here must be your cornet of horse. There will be no need to mention his name, but the old wretch, who is as sharp as Satan, will most likely know him. He is aware, however, that Master Ned has been over in the wars in France, so the story will go down."

"It seems to me, my good friend Sykes,"

said Dr. Winthorne, "that you are going to tell a vast number of lies. Mark you, now, I will have nothing to do with them. I do not even know that I ought to stand by and hear them."

"You shall not hear a lie come out of my mouth," said Sykes, laughing. "My Lord the Prince, I dare say you are willing enough to buy Langley Court and the estate, if I will sell it to you for a gold crown, what you call in France *un ecu d'or*."

"Oh, very willingly," answered Soubise, "This cinnamon is worth *un ecu d'or*," and he helped himself to some more.

"Well, then, I will sell you the whole estate for that sum, if ever I can prove my title to it," said Sykes. "It is a bargain. Now Dr. Winthorne; do not you by any scruples spoil your young friend's only chance, if you would not have us take you for a cropped-eared puritan, instead of a good old sound Church of England man."

"Well, then, do not you lie too much, Mr.

Attorney. I will swallow as much as I can, but keep within bounds, or you may chance to find me break out."

"All you have got to do is to hold your tongue, I will do all the speaking. The Prince here may talk as much French as ever he likes, and Master Ned may answer him in the same tongue. I will answer for it that neither Old Grimes, the sexton, nor Master Sykes, the lawyer, will be a bit the wiser for it."

"But when is this to be done?" asked Dr. Winthorne. "We have ridden ten miles already to-day."

"Well," said Mr. Sykes, "if we go over by the Burford road, that is but ten miles, and then we can come to Applethorpe, where you intend to give me a bed, that is but nine miles more; you would not mind going thirty miles any day for a fox hunt?"

"I never go fox-hunting," grumbled Dr. Winthorne.

"No, but you did once," said Mr. Sykes, and, bearing down all opposition, being strongly supported, it must be owned, by Edward and the Prince de Soubise, Mister Sykes carried his point, ordered his own easy going cob to be brought round, and had a bag fixed to the saddle with such little articles of dress as he wanted.

When the four gentlemen issued forth into the street to proceed upon their way, a certain rosiness of Pierrot's nose, which, together with some dewy drops in his eye, gave his face somewhat the aspect of a morning landscape, induced Edward to believe that he had been engaged in the pious employment of breaking good resolutions. But Pierrot declared manfully that he had only been following his young master's orders, with his French companions. "You told me to treat them hospitably, sir," he said, "how can I treat them hospitably without drinking with them?"

Edward gave him a caution to keep himself

sober at all events, and on they went upon their way at a brisk pace.

"Now," said Sykes, as they approached the old park wall which had fallen down in several places, "We won't go near the old rascal; we must be perfectly indifferent."

"I recollect this park well," said the Prince de Soubise, "what a splendid place it was before the fire."

"Hush, hush," cried Sykes, "that is English;" riding on, he pulled up his horse at a spot where some cottages were built between the road and the river, just fronting the old iron gates of what was called the Grass Court, beyond which, some two hundred yards off, appeared the blackened ruins of Langley.

The walls were all down, at least those of the main building, for not only had the fire overthrown them, but the pick and the shovel had been busy for several weeks after the catastrophe turning over the principal ruins, in search of plate and other articles of value,

which had not been carried out during the fire. There the gentlemen dismounted, the servants tied the horses to the iron gates, and the whole party entered the Grass Court and looked around. At that moment an old wizened face appeared at one of the small lozenges of a cottage window, and the next a clink of the door was opened, and the same face gazed out. In the mean time Master Sykes, with his riding whip in his hand, was pointing out to Soubise all the wonders of the place, telling him where the great hall used to stand, where the guest chambers were, and where were the private apartments of the Lady of Langley. Never in his life was he so eloquent. While he went on an old man, of perhaps eighty, hobbled across the road, and came close up to the side of Dr. Winthorne. Just at that moment Mr. Sykes pointed with his whip to a tower a little detached from the main building, and apparently of more ancient architecture, saying, "That was the wine and

ale cellar, and I have heard people say that during the fire the casks burst with an explosion like so many cannon."

"That is not true," said the old man, who had just come up, "for there had not been a thing or a body in that tower for thirty years before. Why the stairs were half rotted away, and Sir Richard would have pulled it down had it not been for my Lady, who liked the look of it."

"Ah, is that you old Grimes," said Mr. Sykes, "why you look younger than ever."

"I shall live to bury you yet," said the old sexton, "don't make me wait long, for I am tired enough of life, I am sure. Who is that you have got with you, Sykes?"

"This is a French nobleman, the Prince de Soubise," replied the Attorney, "as he cannot live in his own country on account of the troubles, he has come over to England. We have been talking about his buying this place. Indeed, it is almost a bargain. He will have

all these ruins cleared away," he continued in a confidential tone, and somewhat dropping his voice, to prevent Dr. Winthorne hearing too much.

The old sexton's face turned a little pale, but the next instant he said gruffly, "You can't sell him the place, Sykes."

"No, but Sir Richard can," replied the lawyer.

The old man grunted forth something, which nobody heard distinctly, but which had some reference to "Sir Richard," and "not paying a pension," and "giving no orders."

Sykes kept his eye fixed upon him steadily, and though he saw an uneasy look come upon the old man's face, which was turned at that moment towards the ruined tower, and looking round the Attorney saw that the servants, having left the horses at the gate, were sporting about in the court yard, and that Pierrot had mounted upon a pile of stones which had fallen from the tall wall above.

"What were you saying, Grimes?" asked Mr. Sykes, "that Sir Richard had not paid your pension; that is strange. The agent has got plenty of money in his hands, for he has got all the rents of Langley, and Sir Richard has not drawn a shilling."

"Ay, but he says he has got no orders," said Grimes, with a hasty and uneasy manner, "but what I am saying now is, that man will break his neck if he goes up there. I tell you he will; I put my hip out once, doing just the same thing."

"Ha," exclaimed Sykes, "I thought that was at the fire, Grimes; but what you say is very true. He will break his neck. Call him down, sir, Call him down; he is your servant."

The last words were addressed to Edward, who instantly called to Pierrot to come down, which the good man unwillingly did, for he had imbibed just a sufficient quantity of liquor to make him full of sport without shaking his nerves.

Now it is to be hoped that the reader read and pondered well the description given of that old tower in the seventh chapter of this eventful history, but as there are some readers, and a great number of them, who will skip certain passages which they, in their superciliousness, think of little importance, I may as well recall the words of Edward Langdale, while he was narrating the scenes of his early life to Clement Tournon and Lucette—"The whole of the house was burned," he said on that occasion, "and the greater part of the walls fell in, with the exception of those of the Ivy Tower, which were very ancient, and much thicker than the rest. Even there the wood-work was all consumed, and the staircase fell, except where a few of the stone steps, about half-way up, clung to the masonry."

Since Edward had seen the place, or remarked it with any particular attention, some changes had come over that tower, though they were not very apparent. We shall be

compelled to notice them more in a moment or two ; suffice it, for the present, to say, that those stone steps, which Edward had mentioned, were still sticking out about half-way up the tower, and that somehow or other Pierrot had contrived nearly to reach them.

However, Mr. Sykes took no notice of the careful forethought of an old sexton for a foreign servant's life, though he thought his benevolence strange ; but went on round the old building, the piles of rubbish, and the blackberry bushes which encumbered them, speaking a word or two every now and then to Doctor Winthorne, and keeping Mr. Grimes in pretty constant conversation. There is a game which young people play at, called, I think, " Hide and seek," and Mr. Sykes was determined to have a game with the old sexton. The seeker, when he approaches the object of his search, is told that he is hot ; when he goes far from it, that he is cold. Now in the neighbourhood of most parts of

the old building Grimes's face said plainly as as possible, "Cold—cold as ice;" but when Mr. Sykes brought him near the old Ivy Tower again, there was a tremulous motion of the leaning under lip, and most anxious twinkle of the eye, and a fidgetty motion of the hands, which said, as plainly as possible, "Warm, warm, very hot." This was the more apparent when the party came in face of that part of the tower, where about a third of the wall, rent from top to bottom by the great heat, had fallen, and strewed the ground with ruins. Mr. Sykes did not look up at the tower at all. His eyes were fixed upon the face of Mr. Grimes, and he was reading it as a book. Doctor Winthorne was reading it too. Edward Langdale and the Prince de Soubise were talking together in French, but their eyes were well about them all the time.

Suddenly Edward exclaimed in English, "Why Pierrot could have gone up very easily; there is a stone taken out of the wall

every two or three feet, and between them somebody has made steps, by jamming in large blocks of wood, with smaller stones. Besides the tough old stems of ivy would take any one up who had hands to hold by—Pierrot, Pierrot !”

“ No, no,” cried Doctor Winthorne, “ send for a ladder under the church. My man shall go.”

“ Doctor, Doctor,” said Mr. Grimes, with a face as pale as death, “ I want to speak to your reverence.”

“ Well, speak out,” cried the bluff parson, but the old man drew him a little aside, and said, “ If they will give me a hundred pounds sterling, I will tell them something.”

“ Not a penny, you old sinner,” said Doctor Winthorne, “ go down for the ladder to the church, William ; get some men, and bring it up, and be quick.”

“ Oh, Doctor, I am an old man, and have suffered very much for the last fifteen years.”

"What is that he is saying? What is that he is saying?" said Sykes, "I have a notion you are very like the boy who went up the apple tree to steal his neighbour's fruit; the branch broke, and he cracked his leg, and, ever after, he used to say that it had pleased God to afflict him."

"At that moment a loud shout was heard from the tower above, and Pierrot, who had run up like a squirrel, put his head, shouting "A pie's nest, a pie's nest! here are all manner of things!"

"Well, stay there and guard them," cried Dr. Winthorne.

"They are all mine," cried the old man Grimes, wringing his hands, and speaking with the air and tone of a disappointed demon.

"Well. I will not speak a word, I have done nothing. What business have you to take my things? I shall go home; if there is law in England, I will have it"—and he was turning away towards the gates, when

Mr. Sykes took him by the arm, saying, "John Grimes, I apprehend you for robbery on the night of the fire at Langley. Master Ned, tell that servant not to let him depart; I will be responsible. I know my man, and have had my eye upon him for many years; the old fool could not keep his tongue from babbling, and boasted what he could do if he liked."

A few minutes passed in almost perfect silence, till the church ladder was brought and reared against the tower, and then all the younger men ran up. Doctor Winthorne and Mr. Sykes kept guard over the prisoner, having no great confidence in their own agility, and not being much accustomed to mount ladders, and for a moment or two Mr. Grimes, now evidently panic struck, continued to whisper eagerly to Dr. Winthorne, while Mr. Sykes's eyes were turned with impatience towards the tower.

"I can promise you nothing," answered the

Clergyman bluffly, "it is no great matter to them what you confess, or what you don't; but, perhaps, if you do tell the whole truth, Ned Langdale, in consideration of your great age, may spare you. It is a horrible thing to see a man hanged at eighty."

At that moment the servants began to come down, bringing between them a chest of no very great size, but bound with brass, and somewhat ornamented, though its colour and appearance shewed it to have been a good deal scorched with fire. Though its weight did not seem very great, the men carried it with much care, the occasion of which became evident when they reached the ground, for the top had been rudely forced open, and they were afraid of its falling back, and the contents tumbling out.

A number of other objects were subsequently brought down—a chalice (evidently the property of some church), a silver waiter, a clergymans cassock, a number of silver

spoons (bearing the arms of the family of Langdale), and a whole mass of miscellaneous articles, some valuable, some worthless. But Mr. Sykes put his foot firmly upon the chest, after it was laid upon the ground, saying, "Take notice, Doctor, that I do not open this till there are plenty of witnesses." The moment, however, that the Prince de Soubise and Edward had descended, he called upon them to remark what the chest contained, and proceeded to the examination.

It is not my intention to give a descriptive catalogue of old papers, but, after turning over many documents of no great importance, a parchment was found and opened, and the Prince de Soubise instantly put his finger on the lowest part of the fifth sheet, saying, "There stands my name."

"Well," said Doctor Winthorne, "I can easily conceive this old man stealing the sacrament cup and the silver spoons—I remember the robbery of the church quite

well—those he could melt down, and he was a great fool for not doing it; but why he should take brother Wynston's gown, which he could never dare to wear, and why he should steal this box of papers, which he could make no use of, I cannot imagine."

It is impossible for any writer of history to discover and describe the real motives of one half the actions he relates. And what it was moved old Grimes, the sexton, at that moment, I cannot at all pretend to say; but he certainly mumbled in low and tremulous accent, and with some tears, "I thought it was my Lady's jewel-case."

The scene that took place now is not worthy of description. Let the reader imagine the congratulations that were poured upon Edward Langdale; how all his friends shook hands with him heartily; how Pierrot, who from his knowledge of English understood the whole, almost danced with joy; and how the servant of the Prince de Soubise, seeing all

the rest do it, shook hands with him too, and wished Monsieur a good morning, being the two principal words he possessed. A cart was procured, and also a constable, and under his charge, escorted by Dr. Winthorne's servant, Mr. Grimes and all the contents of his Magpie's nest, with the exception of the all-important settlement, which Mr. Sykes would not part with, were carried over to Applethorpe that night.

Doctor Winthorne and his party had preceded them by nearly an hour, and very important business occupied the remainder of the day till it was time to retire to rest. On that business we need not dwell at present, but in order not to be obliged to turn back to a character which, however important, has appeared but briefly, let me say that, that very night, Mr. Grimes, in the first terror of detection, made a full and frank confession of all he had done. He had been one of the first to enter the house on the night of the

fire, and had met Lady Langdale carrying the case which contained her marriage settlement. He had instantly asked her after her boy, and dropping the case she had flown to Edward's room to see if he had been rescued by his father. The sexton concluding that the case contained her jewels had seized upon it and carried it off. At first he had concealed it under some of the bushes, but had afterwards carried it up into what was called the Ivy tower, which, having been vacant and in ruins for some years, he imagined would never be searched. When asked why he had not carried it to his own cottage he replied, "Because that was certain to be examined as soon as they discovered that any thing was lost."

He was never prosecuted for the thefts he had committed, but he died some seven weeks after, perhaps as much from shame and disappointment as disease, and thus he never had the pleasure of burying Mr. Martin Sykes.

CHAPTER XV.

“I CAN promise you nothing, my young friend;” said the Prince de Soubise about a fortnight after the period at which I concluded the last chapter, “till I have consulted with my brother Rohan and some other members of my family. You English people view these matters differently from ourselves in France—a marriage is not only the uniting two persons who are attached to each other, but it

is linking of two families together. Of course this nominal and merely formal marriage between you and my young cousin, is altogether null and void, of no effect or consequence."

"I do not know, my Lord the Prince," replied Edward, in a tone of a good deal of irritation, "I have been assured it is a perfectly valid marriage, and, I must respectfully add, I shall attempt to prove it so."

"Pshaw," said Soubise, in a light tone, "we had better not take up hostile positions towards each other." and, turning on his heel, he left the room.

The scene of this conversation was the Rector's library at Applethorpe, for Doctor Winthorne had a head-ache, and had retired to rest, and as soon as the Prince was gone Edward took forth some letters he had received that morning, and, approaching the table where the candles stood, he read them again with an eager look. No French post

to his knowledge had come in, but yet the letters were from France, and one addressed to Clement Tournon was sent open to him, whilst another, very short, but in Lucette's own hand, tied and sealed, came to him direct.

Both were of a date which surprised and alarmed the young Englishman; that from Clement Tournon only two days after he had left Rochelle; that from Lucette fully seven weeks previous. The letter of the goldsmith, which enclosed the other was somewhat long. It told Edward a good deal about Rochelle, and contained much matter that need not be recapitulated; but the point of greatest interest was his mention of Lucette. "Probably," he said, "she has told you, in the enclosed, all she has told to me, and therefore I need not repeat it. She calls upon us both for aid, and as far as a feeble old man can give it she shall not want it; but, alas, my dear Edward, it is very wrongly that men

attribute power to wealth. I have found it, and know that there are times when heaps of gold will not buy a loaf of bread. However, if my last livre will help that dear girl, she shall have it. In the meantime do you, young, active, enterprising as you are, follow her directions to the letter. You can do more than I can."

"I set out this very night, but considering that you may want money for so long and expensive a journey, I have left such directions that all your drafts upon me will be paid to any reasonable amount. In a month I will be in Huntingdon, where I am assured, by one I can depend upon, my presence is required for your benefit."

Lucette's letter was but a note—

"Fly to me, my beloved husband," so it said, "if you love your poor Lucette as she loves you, come to me without the delay of an hour. There are people here who want to take me away, and carry me to France.

They have no authority from Monsieur de Rohan, otherwise, hard as he is, I should feel myself secure; but they have great power with the rulers of this republic, it seems. Madame de la Cour is an excellent woman, but weak and timid. She says that she dares not resist them; that she is but a poor exile herself, and that when they are ready to go, she must yield me up to them. I would rather die, were it not that when I think of you hope still comes in to give me a ray of light, which all these sorrows and troubles cannot darken. Oh come soon to your poor Lucette."

Edward looked at the date again. There was no time to be lost, if he was not already too late, and at once he determined on his course. The two years, during which he had promised not to seek Lucette, were nearly at an end; the words of Monsieur de Soubise had given him no encouragement to wait for the consent of her family; the only course was to make her his own irrevocably; then let


them scoff at the marriage between them, if they would. He would go to Richelieu he thought; he would lay before him the letters he had received; he would beseech the Cardinal to free him, for the few short weeks that remained, from the promise he had made, and to speed him to Venice, with the power that only he possessed. Once, side by side, with his clear little bride, he thought it would not be in the power of worlds to tear them apart.

The determined and impetuous spirit roused itself; recent success had refreshed hope; he had found more money waiting for him than he expected, so that no one of the small obstacles which so frequently trip up eagerness by wanting, and he determined to set out that very night.

Not more than half an hour was occupied in his preparations, and then he went to Dr. Winthorne's room, and knocked at the door. After the second knock a somewhat testy voice told him to come in, and there he

remained for a full hour in earnest conversation. Whatever took place nothing Doctor Winthorne said induced him to alter his resolution, but, at about twelve o'clock at night, he and Pierrot mounted in the courtyard, and set out for London.

Let us pass over all the little impediments of the road, the horse shoes and the blacksmiths, and the trouble about a pass from Dover to Calais, which, as the relations between France and England had become much more amicable, presented no great difficulties after all, and let us carry Edward at once to the gates of Paris, where the gay and glittering crowd was as dense, and perhaps more brilliant, in those days than it is in ours. The young man's brain felt almost confused at the number before his eyes, and the whirling rapidity of all around him. As he knew nothing of the town, he had to ask his way to an inn which had been recommended to him, and met with all the urbanity and real good



humour which have always distinguished the Parisian population.

The master of the auberge, for there were no hotels in Paris in those days, till the nobility, who had hotels, broken in fortune and deprived of power, were forced to sell their dwellings to the affable receivers of all men, received him as he himself would have called it with all distinction, and his reverence was greatly increased when the young stranger called for pen and ink, and paper, and indited a note to the Cardinal Prime Minister, telling him of his arrival in Paris, and craving an audience as soon as possible on business of the utmost importance. He had the good faith to tell him that the business was of importance to himself, but that frankness was not thrown away upon the Cardinal.

He sealed the letter with the great seal of his arms, and begged the aubergist to send it immediately by a messenger who would, if possible, obtain an answer.

The good man remarked that "it was the hour of the Cardinal's dinner, and that men said that his Eminence was to set off the following day upon a long journey."

"The more reason he should have that letter without delay; and, if the man brings me back an answer, I will give him a gold crown."

What took place at the Cardinal's palace—a smaller building than the magnificent edifice he afterwards erected, long known first as the Palais Cardinal, and afterwards as the Palais Royal, I do not know—but at the end of an hour and a half the man returned, and with a happy grin demanded his gold crown, handing Edward a sealed paper. The contents were as follows.—"I am commanded by his Eminence to inform Monsieur de Langdale that, though he cannot give him a formal audience, he will see him to night at the Theatre of the Hotel de Bourgogne, where he will hear whatever he has to communicate.

This letter presented at the door will be his introduction. "Rossignol."

Edward Langdale took care to obtain every information he could from the landlord in regard to the Parisian theatre, which was at that time just beginning to rise into some degree of importance. Some years before the theatres of Paris were merely the resort of bad women and dissolute men, and the scene of very bad actors; but Richelieu, with that fine taste which was one of his remarkable characteristics, had not only seen that the stage might easily be refined, but had absolutely refined it. Excellent actors were engaged at both the great theatres of Paris, authors, not alone of merit, but of real genius, pressed forward in a new career of literature, and the highest and purest ladies of the French court graced the theatre; perhaps as much to please and flatter the great Minister, as for any entertainment they received.

At the hour which had been indicated by the landlord Edward was at the door of the Hotel de Bourgogne, and as he saw that every body was paying for entrance he did the same, and then exhibited the letter of the Secretary Rossignol. The moment it was seen by the people at the door the effect was magical. Two men started forward bowing to the ground, reproached the young stranger in somewhat stifled terms for not shewing the note before he had paid for admission, and begged to lead him to the Cardinal who, they informed him, had just entered. The arrangement of a theatre in those days was very different from that of modern times, but yet Richelieu had his little room or box—as we should call it now at the Hotel de Bourgogne, close to the stage but not upon it. Into this room no one was admitted but those specially invited, and at the door stood two of his guards, who, however, gave instant ingress to Edward as soon as they saw the letter he carried in his

hand. In the box were some eight or nine people, with the Cardinal himself on the left hand side, where he had a full view of the stage, but could hardly be seen through the body of the house. The play had not commenced, and he turned his head at the sound of the door as Edward entered. The moment he saw him he beckoned him up to his side, before Edward had seen the other persons in the box, who, he it remarked, were all standing. Richelieu's first question was what had brought his young friend, as he was pleased to call him, to Paris before the stipulated time. Edward, in his usual brief style, explained all the circumstances, and, without hesitation, placed the two letters he had received in the Minister's hands. Richelieu read them and smiled, saying, "So you are both still very much in love with each other. Well, I have done one good work at least in life—*pour l'amour de Dieu*. Now what do you intend to do, Monsieur de Langdale."

“ To go post haste to Venice, may it please your Eminence,” replied Edward, “ and as it will not want much more than six weeks when I arrive there of the time I promised you not to seek her as my wife, I intend to ask you to free me from that promise. Let me claim her as my own, and trust to my own good luck and your power to sustain me.”

The Cardinal seemed half inclined to laugh, “ Take her when you can get her,” he said, with something more than a smile. “ But you cannot get to Venice, my good boy, till the King opens the pass of Suza. Don't you know that the very impracticable Duke of Savoy holds all the passes closed, and thinks that he can resist the power of France ?”

“ By the Lord, I wish I had the power of France,” said Edward, “ I would soon make him open them.”

“ Ha, ha !” said Richelieu, with a significant nod of the head, “ did I not tell you that one day you would become ambitious ? but the

power of France is just as well as it is, and I think the King can open the passes as well as you could. He has gone there now, and I am going after him to witness his victory, but, hush, they are going to begin the play. Mark it well, and tell me what you think of it."

Almost as he spoke a comedy commenced, and Edward withdrew from Richelieu's side into the little crowd behind. It was a piece of no great merit, one of the failures of the great Corneille, and to say the truth, Edward's thoughts were deeply engaged with other things.

While he was trying to attend, however, his hand was gently pressed by some one near, and, turning round, he beheld the diminutive figure of Morini, the Italian adventurer.

There was something in the man that Edward could not altogether dislike, especially after the kindness he had shewn him on two or three occasions, and he shook hands with him warmly. The little man stood on tiptoes, and

the other said in a whisper, "Good fortune to you."

"You and the Cardinal will always have good fortune unless you quarrel. Look just opposite. Did you ever see so beautiful a creature?"

Edward cast his eyes across the theatre, which was not very well lighted, and saw a group of ladies splendidly dressed, and well deserving commendation, but there was only one struck him particularly, seated somewhat behind, and with a profile only displayed; but there was something exquisitely beautiful in the line of the face and the whole turn of the head, so much so, that he moved a little on one side, to see her more distinctly. There, however, the head-dress of another lady interposed and he was disappointed.

At that moment the first act ended, and Richelieu beckoned him to his side again.

"What are you staring at there, young man? What would your Lucette say? I am afraid you are faithless."

"Oh, no, my lord," replied Edward, "that lady is very beautiful, but Lucette is more so, to my mind at least."

"Do you think so," said Richelieu. "I do not know which you were looking at, but one of them is my niece, the Duchess d'Aiguillon. What do you think of the comedy?"

"Not much," replied Edward, "but I am really no judge, my lord."

"I think you are a very good judge," said Richelieu, whose dislike to Corneille is well known. "Now, I tell you what you had better do. Go on with me to Suza. You can help to force the pass as a volunteer, if you like, and then go on to Venice should you feel disposed. You shall have Morini for a companion, and I will give you one of the King's foragers to see that you are not starved on the road."

No proposal could be more agreeable to Edward Langdale, but there was one impediment which he frankly told the Cardinal. As always happens, he had miscalculated his expenses, and

found that the money he had brought from England would hardly suffice till he arrived at Venice. "I can get more to-morrow, your Eminence, I believe," he said, "for I have full authority to draw on my good friend Clement Tournon, whose credit is good in Paris; but that will take time, and your Eminence, I presume, sets out early."

"Not very early," answered Richelieu, "but if you follow me on the next day, you will catch me on the road. You can ride fast I know, for you nearly killed the poor Basques who were sent to ride after you when you left Nantes. Morini will help you to get the money. Don't you know he is an Alchymist, and can change any thing into gold? But he will take you to my banker, who is the best Alchymist after all. So Clement Tournon trusts you, does he? he is the first goldsmith of the kind I fancy."

"I can well afford to pay him now, my lord," replied Edward, "for in one lucky day, which the Romans would have marked with a white

stone, I recovered the deeds which secured to me my mother's large property, which deeds had been lost for several years."

"What day was that," asked Richelieu, in a somewhat eager tone.

Edward told him, for he remembered it well, and the Cardinal immediately called up Morini to his side, and spoke to him for a moment or two in a low tone.

"The very same day, your Eminence, says," replied Morini, with a little air of triumph. "Such small coincidences may be necessary to confirm your belief; with me it is not so. The stars never lie, my Lord Cardinal."

"If they speak at all, I suppose they do not," said Richelieu.

"They have spoken very plainly in this case," replied the Astrologer; "but the actors are going to begin again," and he was about to retire.

"Never mind," said the Cardinal, "stay here. I have got orders to give you, and I want them obeyed to the letter."

Edward knew that it was sometimes dangerous to overhear too much of the minister's conversation; he had heard of a man's finding his way into the Bastille merely because he had been very near his Eminence while he was conversing with a friend, and he therefore prudently withdrew to the further part of the box. While the second act went on, Richelieu continued to talk with Morini in a low tone, it is true, but with indifference not at all complimentary to the actors or the piece. To the last acts he was somewhat more attentive, but went away before the whole play was concluded, merely saying to Edward as he passed "Go with this good Signor, Monsieur de Langdale, and follow his counsels. He has heard my opinion upon several matters, and until we meet again you had better be guided by him, even in what may seem things of small consequence."

Edward Langdale bowed, and the Minister passed out; but Morini approached his, Edward's side, saying "Let us go also, my young

friend. There is no use of staying to see this stupid play." The young gentleman's eyes, however, were fixed upon the opposite side of the theatre, where the Cardinal's niece and the ladies in her company were also preparing to take their departure. He had caught another glance of that beautiful face, though it was but for a moment; and now the figure as she was moving away showed lines as lovely as the profile. Taller than most of her companions, and yet not very tall, every movement seemed grace itself, and just as she was passing the door, she turned round and gave a quick glance at the Cardinal's box, which certainly did not diminish the admiration of the young Englishman.

"How very beautiful the Duchess of Aignillon is," said Edward, turning to Morini.

"Oh, yes;" replied the other, "she is perhaps the most beautiful woman in France; but take care of what you are about, for some people say the Cardinal is in love with her himself, and he will bear no rivals."

"Oh, love," said Edward, "is out of the question. I look at her, Signor Morini, merely as I should look at a beautiful statue. I love, as you know, one fully as beautiful, and to me a thousand times more dear than she could ever become."

Now you mention it," said Morini, "it strikes me there is a great deal of likeness between them."

"There is," said Edward. "But Lucette is much younger and not so tall. Now I will follow you, my good sir;" and they went out of the theatre together.

CHAPTER XVI.

YOUTH and fate are always at variance as to times and distances. Youth says "one day," fate says "two." Youth says "fifty miles ;" but fate generally makes it a hundred. Edward had more difficulty in getting a thousand crowns than he had expected. And he did not altogether think that Signor Morini aided him as much as he might have done. Richelieu, who had only made a very short stay in Paris, had quitted the capital about mid day,

and Edward, as may be supposed, was all impatience to hurry after; but Morini on the contrary was as cool and composed as if he was making an astrological calculation, always remarking that they would overtake the Minister long before he got to Suza. "He never travels very fast, you know," said the little Italian. "And besides he has got a whole party of the ladies of the court with him, who always make a march tedious. They went off at daylight this morning, but you may count upon them to make the journey at least five days longer than it ought to be."

"Nevertheless," said Edward, "I wish to proceed as fast as possible, and the objections of these Bankers seem to me to be ridiculous."

"Oh, no, they make no objections," said Morini. "They only require a little time to consider. They are not all in love. They do not all want to go to Venice. They do business in a business like way, and have no idea of firing off large sums like cannon shot."

However the whole of that day passed without the money being procured, and the second day had seen the sun rise several hours, when at length Signor Morini thought fit to whisper two words in the ear of Monsieur Philippon, the Banker, which, as if by magic, brought forth the thousand crowns, about which there had been so much difficulty. It was, however, three o'clock in the evening before Edward Langdale could depart; and then, besides Signor Morini, himself, and the King's forager, who had been promised, were half a dozen lackeys and pages, and a good deal of baggage, which did not promise to accelerate their journey. Once started, however, and with sufficient money in his pocket, Edward resolved to delay for no man, and be at Suza as soon as the Cardinal. He was somewhat mistaken in his calculation, however, for Richelieu pursued his way wherever he could by water, and though the Prime Minister could always command boats, the

young English gentleman could not obtain the same accommodation in a country where the passage of troops and the court had rendered all means of progression scarce. In every other respect the first part of Edward's journey was without accident. I might almost say without incident. But it so happened that at Montargis, where the young gentleman arrived in the afternoon, a large party of ladies were setting out on horseback, just at the moment he entered the little town. The number of servants with them, and a small body of the Cardinal's guard, showed that they belonged to the Court, which could not otherwise have been discovered by their faces, as each, according to the general custom of that day, wore a little black velvet mask, called a "loup," to guard her complexion when travelling. Signor Morini, however, either divined who each was by her figure, or else, with Italian carelessness, took his chance of mistakes, for in he dashed at once

into the party, talked first to one and then to another, and seemed very well received by all. Edward had ridden up by his side, but as he knew nobody he spoke to nobody, till one of the ladies observed in a very sweet voice, "You do not seem as sociable as your companion, sir."


"I could not presume," said Edward, "to address ladies whom I have never seen before, unless they gave me some encouragement to do so."

"I do not know whether you have seen me," said the lady, "but I have seen you."

"Pray, where?" asked Edward, "that I may give that wild bird fancy some notion how to fly."

"I saw you last with the Cardinal, at the Hotel de Burgogne," said the lady, with those sort of trembling accents which are so attractive on young and beautiful lips—small drops of honey to young ears and hearts.

"Last!" said Edward, "had I ever the



pleasure of seeing you before that night."

"I did not mean to say that," answered the lady, "but you imply that you did see me then."

"I saw two or three very beautiful persons," said Edward, "but have no means of knowing which of those you are."

"No, nor shall you have any," she replied, bowing her head gracefully, "neither to-day, nor to-morrow, nor the next day; but if you are very good and behave yourself very well I may take off my *loup* some time between this and Michaelmas. But now tell me where are you riding so fast?—to get yourself killed at Suza?"

"No," answered Edward, "such is certainly not my object; but I am going towards Venice, and wish to reach that City as soon as my horse can carry me."

"Oh! that is a long way off," said the lady. "I think I must keep you near me; you shall be my Cavalier along the road. I

will find out some crime you have committed, and put you to all sorts of penances."

"But waat if I have committed no crime?" asked the young gentleman.

"Oh, but you have," she said. "You should have known me the moment you saw me. No mask should be sufficient to hide a lady from a gallant and courteous cavalier. You ought to be able to see my face through my *loup*, as if it were made of glass."

Edward smiled but made no reply, but he thought within himself—"Lucette would not have spoken so to a mere stranger. What a difference there is between her pure simplicity and the free manners of these courtly ladies."

"You do not answer," continued the lady. "I am afraid we do not ride fast enough for you; now what is it makes you so anxious to run forward to Venice? I warrant it is some of the beautiful black eyes of the City of the Sea."

"No indeed it is not," replied Edward. "I never was in Venice in my life."

"Well," she continued, "love of some kind at all events. Nothing but love could make a man in such a hurry. Now tell me, what kind of love is it?"

"Why the most extraordinary love in the world," answered Edward. "The love of a man for his wife, a love they little recognize in France, not at all in Italy, and so dilute in Turkey that it is not worth having."

"Very marvellous love indeed," replied the lady; "yet I think if I were a man and were married, I should love my wife better than you do."

"I defy you," said Edward laughing.

"Now I shall catechise you," returned the lady. "Do you think of her every day?"

"Every hour, every moment," said Edward.

"Do you make her your chief object in life? pray for her, work for her."

"Every thing else in life," said Edward "is but valuable to me as it has reference to her. Ambition become splendid when I

think it may elevate her. Money, which is but dross, seems to gain real worth if she is to share it."

"And do you ever," continued the lady laughing, "stare at pretty faces across a theatre and dream for a minute or two as to what might be your luck if you had not tied yourself to another."

"No;" replied Edward boldly, "I sometimes may stare at pretty faces, and think them very beautiful, when I think there is a fanciful resemblance to that which I think most beautiful of all."

The lady was silent for a minute or two, but at length she answered. "Well, I think you are very rude. You must be an Englishman, you are so uncivil. You dare me so that I have a great mind to make you in love with me, just to punish you—nay do not shake your head. I could do it in five minutes. All men are as weak as water, at least so I have always been told, and I could soon bring

you to my feet if I chose to employ a few little simple arts upon you."


"I doubt not your power, dear lady," replied Edward. "Upon any heart not pre-occupied like mine; but Helen of Troy, or her bright mistress Venus herself, could have no effect upon one who loves as I do."

"Well this is too bad," said the lady. "We shall see. We have a long journey to take together, and if before it is over I do not make you tell me your love my name is not—what it is"

Just at this moment one of the young cavaliers rode up with the gay and dashing air of his country and his class, and addressed the young lady in some common place terms of gallant attention. In an instant she seemed turned into ice, answered a few words politely but in so cold a tone, that Edward could not but see the dangerous preference she seemed to shew him. The young man appeared to feel it too, and after staying at her side for

about five minutes he directed his horse to another group, where his society seemed more welcome. The conversation was renewed between Edward and his fair companion as soon as he was gone, and did not much vary in character from the specimen already given. It was late, however, when the party arrived at Chatillon, and the ladies retired at once to the apartments which had been prepared for them, but at eight o'clock on the following morning none of them had quitted their chambers, nor did Edward see any preparation amongst guards or attendants for pursuing their journey till a late hour. Calling Pierrot, without much deliberation, the young Englishman ordered his horses to be saddled, and was in the act of mounting when Morini, whom he had not yet seen that day, appeared at the door exclaiming, "Hi! Where are you going?"

"To Suza," replied Edward springing on his horse's back, and without waiting to hear



any remonstrance from the little Italian; he rode off as fast as he could go.

We shall not pursue him on his journey, nor even dwell upon the forcing of the pass at Suza. Suffice it to say that Edward arrived just in time to volunteer the night before the attack. Richelieu he did not see, although he heard he was in the camp; but one of the first persons he met with was the young officer who had gone down with him to the out posts before Rochelle, and who gaily marched up with him against the intrenchments on the following morning. It is well-known how they were taken at the first rush, with no great resistance on the part of the troops of Savoy. But Edward and his companion both received slight pike wounds, one in the arm and the other in the shoulder—sufficient to show they had been in the heat of the battle, but not severe enough to obtain much commiseration. The King, as was usual with him, retired to his quarters as soon as the

pass was carried without enquiring the amount of his loss or taking any notice of the wounded. Not so Richelieu, for as soon as the particulars could be ascertained, he caused a list of all who had suffered much or little to be laid before him.

On the following morning, somewhat to his surprise, Edward received a summons to attend the Cardinal, and when he presented himself met with a somewhat sharp rebuke for having left Morini and his party.

"They tell me you are wounded," said Richelieu. "It serves you very right for having disobeyed my commands."

"It is but a scratch, sir," said Edward. "A rusty nail in an old door would inflict a worse, and I was anxious to show that in all cases except against my own country I was anxious to serve your Eminence."

"That is all very well," replied the Cardinal. "But I like to be obeyed. You could not tell my views or purposes in the directions which I

gave. But as it is done it cannot be helped, and now I suppose you are anxious to go on to Venice?"

"Most anxious," replied Edward. "If I understand your Eminence rightly that you free me from the promise I made to you some two years ago, and authorize me to claim my bride wherever I may find her."

"That is soon settled," said Richelieu, and taking up a pen, he wrote, "Lucette Marie de Mirepoix du Vallais is the wife of Edward Langdale, of Buckley, and these are to summons and require all persons who have, or have had, any controul or custody of the said Lucette, to give her up to the said Edward Langdale, her husband; and, in the King's name, to warn all persons to refrain from opposing the rights of the said Edward Langdale in regard to the said Lucette de Mirepoix, under pretence of relationship, guardianship, or any other cause whatever."

He signed it with his name, and gave it to

Edward, saying, "Get it sealed, and then away to Venice as soon as you please. Peace will be signed in three days, if I am not mistaken, and not only peace with Savoy, young gentleman, but with England, also—hard headed England! In the meantime you can pass freely. My safe conduct, which, of course, you have with you, is as good now, I imagine, in Italy as in France. Only one thing more. Let it be understood that you return and join me as soon as you have fulfilled your mission, and bring your bride with you if you find her." He paused, with a smile of much good humour, and then added, 'When you come back, I may have a little negotiation for you; for the first steps to the surrender of Rochelle I owe to you.'

The political events which followed are well known—the peace of Suza, with Savoy and England; the raising of the siege of Cassal, and the relinquishment of Mantua to the house of Nivers, succeeded with the utmost rapidity,

and the Cardinal de Richelieu saw every thing that his mind conceived, or his hand touched, perfectly successful.

In the meantime Edward Langdale hastened over the Alps, crossed the whole breadth of Italy, and taking boat at Mestre, landed in Venice. But he was not so successful as the great man he had just left. Richelieu's safe conduct obtained for him instant access to all the authorities of the Republic, and with more frankness than they usually displayed they informed him at once that the young lady he sought for was no longer in the city. She had been claimed, they said, some months before by authority, which their laws prevented them from opposing, and had been carried, they believed, into Savoy. Edward then asked for Madame de la Cour, but he found that she also had left Venice, and had gone they believed to Paris. The only person they said who knew anything of Mademoiselle de Merepoix was an old merchant who had

arrived some days before, and was living at a goldsmith's, on the Slavonian Quay. Edward hurried there, and, as he expected, found old Clement Tournon. But the worthy Syndic could give him no information, and was in almost as much distress about his Lucette as Edward himself.

"Depend upon it," he said, "that horrid Madame de Chevreuse had got possession of the dear girl at last, and our only resource will be with the Cardinal. He has eyes everywhere, and will both know where to find her, and how to recover her."

"No time was lost, the old man and Edward set off together, directing their course by Turin and Suza; but again they were disappointed. The King, who, in time of war, forgot all his slothful inactivity, and showed all the fire and eagerness of his father, had by this time turned upon the Cevennes, the last refuge of the Protestants in France, and Richelieu had followed or rather accompanied

him. With the delay of one day at Chambery, to rest the old man, and Edward pushed on after the Cardinal towards Nismes, hearing nothing as they went but tales of Louis's exploits. The army of the Duke de Rohan, which had opposed successfully several of the best Generals of France, had seemed paralyzed by the fierce energy of the King. Town after town had fallen, and Montaubon itself, the people said, could not hold out three days. Such was the last intelligence which Edward received just after his entrance into Ners ; but at the same time came the news, far more satisfactory to him, that Richelieu himself was at Alais, but a few miles distant. No horses were to be procured, his own were tired nearly to foundering, and poor Clement Tournon, in his eagerness to keep up with his young companion, had greatly overtaken his strength. Nothing remained but to pass the night at Ners, a mere village, where almost every house was occupied by some of the followers of the

Court. But though the accommodation was as poor as it could be, yet Edward saw the next morning that Clement Tournon must still remain at Ners. His bodily powers were not equal to carry him further without long repose, and Edward set out for Alais alone, leaving Pierrot to attend upon the old man.


The little town when the young gentleman retired was all alive. Courtiers and soldiers were fluttering about in every direction, and the gay dresses, unspotted and fresh, showing that the Court had been there some days, contrasted sadly with Edward's dusty garments and travel soiled apparel. But, nevertheless, he rode straight forward through what is now called the Place de la Marechale to a house where the numerous groups, both on foot and horseback, before the door, led him to believe the Cardinal's quarters were established. There he sprung to the ground under the arcade, and leaving his tired horse with the perfect certainty that he would not

run away, he was pushing his way through the little crowd round the door, noticed very little by any body, when the voice of his young companion in the attack at Suza met his ear, exclaiming, "Ah, Monsieur de Langdale! Have you heard Montaubon has been taken? But do not let me stop you, for his Eminence was asking for you yesterday."

"As you are of his household," said Edward, "will you have the kindness to tell his Eminence that I am here, for I know none of these people; they do not know me, and I suspect I am not a very courtier-like figure to seek an audience of the Prime Minister."

"I will do it directly," said the young officer, "he is very busy, but I know he wishes to see you; so follow me up." Edward mounted the stairs close after his companion, and entering a chamber, to which there was no ante-room as Edward had imagined, found himself immediately in the presence of Richelieu, who was seated at a table near the

window, while two secretaries were writing at his right hand. The room was half full of people, some of whom were waiting silently as if for audience, while others were conversing in low voices, and one middle-aged man was speaking to the Cardinal, with a paper in his hand, as if making a report. Richelieu raised his eyes as Edward entered, but took no notice, and continued to listen attentively to the gentleman who was speaking. As soon as he was done, the Cardinal said, "Well, be it so; see that it is done," and wrote a few words on a sheet of paper. Another and another succeeded, spoke a few words to the Minister, and received their answer; and then Richelieu, rising, said aloud, "No more audiences this morning." The young Englishman was about to retire with the rest, who were slowly going out, but Richelieu added, "Monsieur de Langdale, I wish to speak to you." Thus saying, he passed into a room beyond, and Edward



followed, leaving none but the secretaries in that which they had just quitted. It was a bed chamber they now entered (for when campaigning, Prime Ministers, as well as others, must put up with such accommodation as they can get), and Richelieu neither seated himself nor asked his companion to be seated.

"You have come at an important moment," said the Cardinal abruptly, "and I almost feared you would not be here in time. Are you willing to undertake a mission for me to Monsieur le Duc de Rohan, some forty miles hence."

"Certainly, your Eminence," replied Edward, "but I must make three conditions, though to you they are very slight ones."

"Ha," said Richelieu, his brow somewhat darkening, "I am not accustomed to conditions; but let me hear what they are. You are an original, like most of your countrymen. Perhaps I shall be able to grant them."

"Simply these three, my Lord Cardinal;

that while I am gone you shall cause search to be made for my young wife who is not in Venice, has been brought to France, and is beyond doubt, I think, in the hands of Madame de Chevreuse."

"Granted," said Richelieu, "the next"

"That you shall send over a physician to good old Clement Tournon, whom I have left ill at Ners."

"Ah!" said Richelieu. "Is he at Ners? that is most lucky! that man Morini said truly. Fortune goes with you. He may help me to raise the money, so that there may be no delay; for you must know, Master Langdale, that even Kings and Prime Ministers when they carry on expensive wars sometimes come to the end of their finances at the very moment when large sums are most necessary. Clement Tournon! he is connected with all the goldsmiths of Nismes, is he not?"

"I heard him say, on the journey, that he had a number of friends there and also in Avignon," replied Edward.

"It will do," said Richelieu; "your second condition is granted. What is the third."

"That your Eminence lends me a fresh horse, for my own is knocked up. I could wish also that I had some servant with me—some one who knows the way."

"The horse you shall have," said Richelieu, "but as for the servant," he continued thoughtfully, "I think you must go alone. I do not wish to send any Frenchman to that camp—nay more, nobody must know where you are going. Look at this map, this is the road," and he pointed with his finger to a map of the Cevennes. "First you go here to St. Martin, then on to Mass Dieu. There you must enquire where the Duke is encamped. I think it is somewhat near Audeal, but you will soon learn." He ceased and fell into a fit of thought, and after waiting two or three minutes Edward enquired, "and what am I to say to him, or will your Eminence write?"

"No I will not write," answered Richelieu.

"Say to him I have received his message, and answer. One hundred thousand Crowns in money, in four days, on the conditions expressed before, and I wish his answer, Yes or No before mid day to-morrow."

"One horse will not carry me there and back, if it be forty miles, in that time, over these mountains," said Edward.

"Pshaw ! kill the horse and buy another," exclaimed Richelieu. "It is worth ten horses for me to have the news to-morrow—stay you must have some credence."

Thus saying, he went into the other room again, stayed a few minutes, and returned with a small packet and a sheet of paper. Both were addressed to the Duc de Rohan, and on the latter was written, "Hear and believe the bearer Edward Langdale, to you already known." And then followed the great seal of Richelieu. The packet was sealed, but as the Cardinal gave it to his young friend, he said, "That contains the terms

which he must sign, and return by your hand. . Go down and get yourself some breakfast in the eating hall, whilst the horse is getting ready. You will find good wine here ; but, remember, " Silence."

Edward went down and soon procured refreshment, but ere he had eaten more than a few mouthfuls, or he had drank more than one draught of wine, one of the secretaries, whom he had seen above, came in with a very reverential bow, saying, " His Eminence desires me to ask if Monsieur de Langdale requires any money for his journey ?"

" No," replied Edward, " I have enough."

The horse was announced as ready the moment after, and Edward springing on his back, set out before the secretary lost sight of him.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ride was long and hot, for it was just the middle of the month of June ; and though the scenery was perhaps without its parallel in the whole world, combining more beauties and more varieties of beauty than ever I saw anywhere else, though every now and then the road was shaded with trees, attaining a height and breadth which would shame the forest giants, yet towards evening Edward was forced to acknowledge to himself that he was very much

exhausted. The horse which bore him was excellent, strong, willing, but not easy in its gait, and it also, ere they reached Audeal, showed the effects of the heat, though it had not had the preceding journey from Ners to Allais. At Audeal he had but little difficulty in extracting from the townspeople an account of the position of the Duc de Rohan's camp, and Edward rode on under the shade of the mountains, and somewhat more slow, calculating that he would have time both to take some rest, and return to Alais before noon on the following day.

It was dark when he arrived, and all that he could discover of the position of the camp was, that it was very strong, while a number of mountain gorges, radiating from a centre, offered the means of retreat in almost any direction. After some difficulties and delays at the outposts, he gave up his horse to one of the soldiers, who regarded him with a somewhat gloomy look, and was led to a little rudely-constructed hut, where a sentry kept guard before the door. He found

the Duc de Rohan perfectly alone, and advancing to meet him, he was received in a much more courteous and friendly manner than at their last interview.

"Monsieur de Langdale," said the Duke, holding out his hand, "I am glad to see you. Pray be seated. I can only offer you a stool in this place, for we are obliged to fare hardly here. What brings you I know not; but I am glad of an opportunity of apologising for some rudeness and heat which I displayed at our last meeting.

By your bearing the Cardinal's safe conduct, I presume you come from him. What have you to say?"

"First let me hand you this," said Edward, giving him the letter of credence, over which the Duke cast his eye hastily, "and next," said Edward, "that in answer to your message his Eminence says one hundred thousand crowns to be paid in four days in money"

"Is that all he said?" said de Rohan, "are you to act negotiator in this business, sir?"

"Not in the least," replied Edward, "I merely bear you a message, and am perfectly ignorant of the whole circumstances, even of the contents of this package, though I have been told that it contains the conditions, which, if you assent to them, you will sign, and enable me to return them to the Cardinal by noon to-morrow."

The Duke took the packet, broke open the seal, and looked at the writing which was very brief, consisting of only three paragraphs. There was a second writing, however, briefer still, apparently, which as he read he knit his brows and bit his lips.

"Am I to understand that you know nothing of these papers," he asked.

"Nothing whatever," replied Edward, and the Duke, rising from his stool, walked up and down the hearth for some minutes in deep thought.


"It must be done," he said, at length.
"There is no use taking counsel in the matter,"
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for it is what they all wish. And thus ends the Protestant cause in France! Monsieur de Langdale, the only part of these papers which is personal to myself is that," and he laid the enclosure before the young Englishman. "Why the Cardinal has made this a condition all along, I cannot conceive, unless it be a point of pride with him."

Edward read the paper and perused these words, "I do hereby solemnly consent to and affirm the marriage of my cousin Lucette Marie de Mirepoix de Vallais, with Edward Langdale, of Buckley, in the county of Huntingdon, England, as solemnized at Nantes on the third of July, in the year of grace 1625."

"I do assure you, my lord," said Edward, "this is none of my doing, and sooner than be any impediment to a peace so necessary to the poor Protestants of France, I say tear it. I will win Lucette by other means."

"No," said the Duke, "I will sign it, I will sign it. I will sign them all: and when a Rohan



pledges his word, the Cardinal may be assured that it will be kept."

He took a little inkhorn from a neighbouring table, and signed the two papers. Then, shaking Edward by the hand again, he said, "Give you joy, cousin. But you look ill and tired."

"I have ridden some sixty miles," said Edward, "with hardly any food and no rest."

The Duke heard his reply with a rueful smile, but called a man from without, telling him to bring the best he had for a young gentleman's supper. The best was merely a bone of ham, and some brown bread, but there was added a flagon of some very good wine.


"I require a little rest more than anything," said Edward, "and I would fain, my lord, lie down to sleep for a few minutes, if your people will take care of my horse and wake me at four o'clock, when they change the sentinels."

"That shall be done," said Rohan. "No chance of sleep for me to-night after signing these papers—here, you can sleep on my bed.

It is as good as any in the camp, I suppose." and opening a door in the boarded partition, he pointed to a great pile of rosemary and wild mountain herbs, saying, "It is a little better than the ground, but fatigue gives balm to sleep."

Edward's eyes were closed in a moment, and he knew nothing more till the Duke himself called him at four. "Your horse is at the door," he said. "There are the papers. I hope his Eminence will be punctual in the payment, for I cannot turn ten thousand men loose amongst the mountains with no money in their pockets. Let the man who has brought the horse walk by your side and give the passwords."

Edward rode away well pleased with his success, and about half-past eleven reached the little town of Alais. There he was informed that the Cardinal had not returned from Ners, but that Monsieur Rossignol would see him, and on being admitted to the well-known secretary, an order to deliver the papers which he brought,



signed by the hand of Richelieu was given him. Edward obeyed, and good Monsieur Rossignol, a man of great talent, though originally a peasant, said in a significant tone, "It will be better for Monsieur to ride on to the Castle at Bourilland, near Ners, where he will find the Cardinal."

"My good sir, I am tired to death, and my horse can hardly move a leg. You forget what these mountain roads are like."

"You can rest below for three or four hours," said the Secretary, "and get some refreshments, by which time your horse will have had rest sufficient, and then ride to Bourilland in the cool of the evening. It will be better. His Eminence desired it."

The thought that perhaps, Richelieu might have obtained through his many-eyed communications some news of Lucette, gave Edward fresh spirit, but still he followed the Secretary's advice, for, after having ridden so hard for many days, some more repose was

absolutely needful. Towards four o'clock, however, he set out towards Ners, having ascertained that the Chateau to which he was directed lay on the right of the road, some two or three miles before he reached the village; and all that need be said of his journey is that the road, as every one knows is beautiful, and that his thoughts were, like all young men's thoughts, a little wild and chaotic perhaps, but with Lucette prominent above all. Some two miles before the Castle appeared in sight, however, he was met by a large cavalcade of gentlemen, ladies, guards, and pack mules, with Richelieu at its head, going back apparently to Alais. The Cardinal drew up his horse, saying, "I have heard of you, my young friend. Rossignol has sent me a messenger. Our good friend, the Syndic, is well and gone to Nismes, but will be back in two days. Go on to the chateau, where I have ordered everything to be prepared for you. There rest in peace for the night.

You will find nobody there plague you, unless it be a few women, who, if they are wise, will let you alone."

The Cardinal moved on as he spoke, and Edward was fain to pursue his way to Bou-rilland. He found some servants on the drawbridge loitering about in the fine summer sunset, but, as soon as his name was given, the omnipotent commands of the Cardinal made them all activity and attention. His horse was taken to the stable by one man; another ushered him into a handsome room, communicating with a bedroom beyond; and a third ran to bring the supper, which he said his Eminence had ordered for him. All around had a very comfortable aspect, and Edward thought, as he threw himself into a chair, "A man with a wife whom he loved, and some little ones to cheer him, might pass his life very happily even here."

The supper was soon brought, and was evidently the handiwork of some courtly cook, the wine was delicate and good, and Edward,

according to the English fashion of all times, chose to take the moderate portion which he did take after his meal. Telling the man who waited on him to leave him, he was about to pass the evening quietly, when, just after the servant had quitted the room, the door opened, and some one looked in. One glance at the figure showed Edward that it was the lady with whom he had ridden some way from Montargis, and, to say truth, the young Englishman would willingly have been spared her company. She still wore the black velvet *loup* over her face, which Edward thought was somewhat too coquettish, considering that it was now dark and the candles lighted, but, of course, he found himself bound to be polite, though he was determined to be as cold as ice. Yet there was something timid and hesitating in her manner that surprised him ; as she came forward he could see that she trembled, and rising, he placed a chair for her, saying. " To what am I indebted for this honour ?"

" I have come to pass the evening with



you," she said, in a low voice, "I cannot let you be here all alone."

Edward did not well know what to reply, and he answered, at random, "Let me beseech you at all events, Madam, to lay aside your mask now. Your complexion runs no risk here."

"No," said the lady, shaking her head, "Not till you tell me you love me, and will marry me."

"Are you not married already," exclaimed Edward.

"Yes," she answered, "I am, but that makes no difference. Do you love me?"

"I have told you, dear lady," said Edward, in as cold a tone as he could assume, "That it is impossible. If you are the lady whom I saw at the Hotel de Burgogne, doubtless, I could have loved you, if my whole heart and soul had not been given to another, for I have seldom seen any body more lovely."

"But who is this you love so well?" said

the lady, "give me her name—her full name."

"Lucette Marie de Mirepoix du Vallais," said Edward, impatiently.

The mask was off in a moment, "Am I so changed, Edward?" said Lucette, throwing her arms around his neck. I know I am taller, much taller, but I did not think you would ever forget me."

"Forget you; Oh, no, no, Lucette," cried Edward, circling her in his arms, and covering her with kisses. "Have I ever forgotten you. Have I ever ceased to think of you. But I saw you but for a moment across the dull and misty air of a theatre, and you are changed—more charming, more beautiful than ever. But, even, Lucette unknown could not rob Lucette long known of the love that has been her's always. When, for a moment, I saw your face, I did not hear your voice, and when I heard your voice, I did not see your face. But now I see all those loved features dis-

tinctly, and wonder how I could be deceived."

"We shall change still more Edward," she said almost sadly, "and will you love me still?"

"Better, still better," said Edward clasping her to his heart. "If Lucette, I loved you still after long absence when you yourself tried to make me love another, do you suppose that affection will wane when the change comes over us together, and you yourself engage me to love you still? Oh yes, Lucette, I will not deny it. You are more beautiful than you used to be, but it was my young Lucette I loved, and how could I love any other?"

"Well I own that it was wrong," said Lucette, "to play with you and tease you as I did, but it was not to try you, for I was sure I knew your heart right well. It was the Cardinal's command, however, and I feared to disobey him. He brought us all from Paris, some for one reason, some for another—one

that she might not intrigue against him at the court of the Queen Mother—another to remove her from poor Ann of Austria—others for the amusement of the King and court, and perhaps to assist him in his own views. Why he brought me I know not—perhaps to tease you on the road —No, no, I do him injustice ! I sincerely believe it was to unite us in the end. But do you forgive me, Edward ? Do you forgive me for acting a part that is not in my nature ? a hundred times the mask was nearly taken from my face. My joy to find that you loved me still and that you were faithful to your poor Lucette, passed all bounds, and made me almost faint with happiness. It is nearly eighteen months since I saw you at Aix, and since then how much I have suffered, and I have heard that you have suffered too, that you have been apprehended and kept in prison, wounded again.”

“ Oh, that is nothing,” answered Edward, “ all has been followed by joy and success. I

never valued wealth, Lucette, till I met with you, but now I have recovered beyond doubt one-half of my patrimonial property. All that really belongs to me—enough and more than enough to secure my Lucette against those grinding cares and petty annoyances which, though less sharp than the fierce blows of misfortune, are more wearing to the spirit and the heart. But tell me, my Lucette, how came you here? I had feared, from what they told me at Venice, you had fallen into the hands of Madame de Chevreuse.”

“Oh, no,” she answered, “that was a mistake; the council notified Madame de la Cour that I was demanded by those who had a right to demand me in France, and with her usual secrecy gave no further information. At first I resolved to fly, but whither could I go? To Madame de Rohan I could not apply; for her life in Venice had been one of great scandal and disgrace. Madame de la Cour could not or would not help me; but in the end I found that

it was the Ambassador from France who claimed me, and when assured that I was to be under the guardianship of the Cardinal himself, I went joyfully. He forbade me to write to you, saying you promised soon to rejoin him. On the night I saw you at the theatre, he told me to look at his box, but to take no notice whatever I might see. The only thing I now fear is the opposition of my high relations. The Duc de Rhoan is the head of the house, and though he was kind to me, very kind whilst I was with him, I knew him to be the proudest man on earth, and as obdurate in his determinations as a rock.'

"You are my wife," said Edward, pressing her to his heart, "my wife by every-tie human and divine. Soubise may oppose, Madame de Chevreuse may oppose, but their opposition is nothing. Look here what authority the Cardinal gave me when I was setting out for Venice."

Lucette looked at the paper which he gave her. "It was unkind of him to let you go,"

she said, "when he knew that I was within two day's journey of Suza, but it was to punish you for leaving that little Morini on the road."

"Do you know why I left him?" said Edward, kissing her rosy lips. "It was because a very beautiful lady said she would make me love her before our journey was ended, and I was resolved to love no body but Lucette. No, my Lucette, our journey together has never ended and through life must never end. You are mine as I have said by every tie. The Duc de Rohan, the only one who had any real authority, I saw last night. His opposition was entirely withdrawn, and his formal approval given in writing to our marriage at Nantes."

Lucette was silent for a moment or two, and turned a little pale, and Edward asked, in a low tone, "What ladies are there here in the Castle?"

"None," said Lucette? "except my maid we are alone.—Now I understand—I think I see why the Cardinal took every one else away and insisted on my staying."

"Assuredly," replied Edward, "because you are my wife, Lucette, and he did not wish that we should be separated any more." Her face was now as rosy as the dawn, and her breath came thick with agitation.

"You are mine, Lucette, are you not mine?" said Edward, "my own, my wife, my beloved?"

"Oh, yes, yes;" sobbed Lucette, casting herself upon his bosom, "my husband, my own dear husband!" And they parted no more.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE famous peace of Alais, which terminated during the reign of Louis the Thirteenth, the struggle of the Protestants of France for a distinct organization, and left them nothing but an insecure toleration, was concluded at Alais on the twenty-seventh of June, 1629, a few day after the reunion of Edward and Lucette. None can doubt that Richelieu was politically right in asserting and enforcing the

sovereign authority over a body of men who had made religious differences a pretext for rebellion, and a continual source of vexation and menace. Nor can any one accuse him of having violated his word in any degree to the Huguenots. They were suffered to follow the forms of their religion in peace, their peculiar tenets found no obstacle to their admission into the highest offices in France, and the Duc de Rohan himself was employed in high and delicate negotiations, and ultimately fell in the military service of the Monarch against whom he had so often fought.

A few days after the period to which we have carried our story in the last chapter, the hundred thousand crowns in gold which were necessary for him, as well as to provide for his troops as to repair his own shattered fortunes, were paid to the Duke according to Richelieu's promise, and the Protestant army was immediately disbanded—glad to escape from the inevitable ruin and disaster which hung

over their heads. The peace concluded at Suza restored those friendly relations with England which had so long been broken off. Spain and Savoy were at least for the time cowed by the power of France; and all men, both friends and enemies saw in the well-directed operations of the French armies and the success of French diplomacy, the great military and political genius of Armand de Plessis.

In the mean time, the Cardinal kindly left Edward and Lucette to the enjoyment of each other's society; and it was not till some six or seven days after the union, which he himself had aided so much to bring about, that he visited them at the Castle of Bourilland. Great success, if in the end it makes men haughty and overbearing, seems at first to soften and expand the heart; and Richelieu at the culminating point of his fortunes, sat down and conversed with the two young people as their friend. He amused himself

somewhat with their love, and expressed, and probably felt, some gratification at their happiness.

“Monsieur de Langdale,” he said, “a foolish prediction has been made to me, that as you and I were born on the same hour, of the same day, in the same month, though a number of years apart—how many I do not remember—my fate and yours should run together, and though of course I put no faith in it, the prophecy has as yet proved remarkably true. I am therefore very desirous to attach you to me, now that peace is signed between France and England, and you must tell me according to an old promise, which you once made, what post I can give you at the Court of France.”

Edward and Lucette looked at each other, and then with his usual frankness Edward answered, “No post, your Eminence, can give me, can attach me more strongly to you than that which you have already given me—the

husband of this dear lady. Two days ago, we had a long consultation with our good friend Clement Tournon, and laid out our plan for life. He is resolved, with the sum he has amassed, to purchase a small and beautiful estate and Chateau not far from Paris, and Lucette and myself intend to live there a great part of each year, as his son and daughter. We shall of course visit England from time to time ; but our wish is to avoid courts and cities as much as may be."

"Young people's dreams," said Richelieu gravely.

"That may be," said Edward, "but I trust will not. However, if your Eminence were to give me some high post, you would make many of the French nobility dissatisfied, and you might find me ungrateful ; but as it is I shall be near you the greater part of my days, and whether I may be in England or in France, if at any time I can serve you with my hand, or my head, or my heart, believe


me I will not forget those happy days, all owing to your great goodness."

"I wish I could dream," said the Cardinal looking down thoughtfully. "It must be a very happy thing to be so confident of the world, and of fate, and of oneself. But be it so, Monsieur de Langdele. Only remember!"

"My Lord, have I ever forgotten?" asked Edward.

"No, no," said Richelieu, "and it is for that I have esteemed you. Come and see me when you are near Paris, for when I have a leisure hour I shall love your conversation. We will talk of art, and literature, and science; and I shall banish, for that hour, the thought of politics, and intrigue, and cabal. Oh, how I hate them! And if you have a son," he continued, laying his hand kindly upon that of Lucette, as he rose to depart, "You shall call his name Armand."

"And you shall bless him," cried Lucette, warmly, kissing his hand, "and I will



tell him that you made his father and myself happy."

Perhaps in all his career of splendid misery that was one of the happiest hours that Richelieu had ever experienced.

The Prince de Soubise, as is well known, did not return to France, and make his full submission to his King, till Edward and Lucette had been married some time. To Edward, whom he met at the Court not long after the final fall of Marie de Medici, he was polite and even friendly; but, whether it was that he was naturally of more haughty disposition than his brother the Duke de Rohan, or that he was never placed under the same pressure of circumstances, he refused to acknowledge, by any authentic act, the legality of the marriage between his young cousin and the son of one of his earliest friends. It made no difference to them, however, nor troubled their peace in the least; and in the end, after witnessing their mutual felicity for

many years, both he and his brother, the Duke, by their own wretched experience, were forced to acknowledge that a marriage of affection has more chance for happiness than a marriage of convenience. Still, however, with the same peculiar obduracy which had characterized his resistance to the Crown, in the hopeless war of the Protestants against Louis the Thirteenth, he refused to sign, on several occasions, the papers which were necessary to enable Lucette to enter fully into possession of her father's estates, saying, "That he would not recognize her marriage with the second son of a simple English gentleman; but his consent was passed over by certain forms of the Parliament; and as for Madame de Chevreuse, with her usual gay lightness, she signed her approbation of the marriage, without a word of opposition; when she found that opposition would be vain, she was even inclined to be exceedingly kind and intimate with the young pair; but Edward

gave no encouragement to her advances, and she satisfied herself by declaring that, like many of his countrymen, he was a handsome man, but somewhat brutal. In regard to Edward's claim to the estate of Buckley, there was no opposition, and he kept quiet possession during the whole of his life of that fine part of his inheritance. The estates of Langley were suffered to go greatly to decay for several years, the rents accumulating in the hands of the agent, without ever being called for or paid over to any one.

How this property reverted to Edward himself, and how the objections of the Prince de Soubise to the marriage of his young cousin with Edward Langdale were at last done away—what was the ultimate fate of Sir Richard Langdale, and how an old proverb was verified, would be too long of telling in the pages which yet remain.

Perhaps, if God spares the life, the health, and the senses of the author of this work,

these particulars may all be related in another. At all events the history of Lord Montagu's Page is completed ; for it would be folly to pursue that history into the calm, continued, uninterrupted happiness of his married life. Every one has been unsuccessful in painting happiness with the pen. Dante failed in his Paradise, Milton in his Paradise Regained, and the writer of these pages is not sufficiently presumptuous to suppose that he could succeed in representing a state as near as this world permits, to that which they attempted to picture in vain.

THE END.



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